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EDITORIAL

DAY OF THE BOFFINS

In Britain, the boffin—an expert who advises government—is a fixture. Over here, we have commissions and advisers, whose job is to tell the President what he wants the public to hear.

The latest example of commissionship is the Commission on Strategic Forces, which will, among other things, seek to resolve the MX impasse. Its chairman, Brent Scowcroft, has denied that the panel was, in the words of *The New York Times*, "established by the President as a safe, bipartisan vehicle to help revive support of the nuclear missile in Congress."

Since the panel is a dense-pack of defense establishment types, the majority of whom love the bomb, we think the charge still stands. Nonetheless, we eagerly await the results of this, the thirty-sixth MX basing study.

In another story in *The Times*, it was reported that the President became angry last month when his economic advisers issued a "gloomy economic projection." He felt, the story explained, that "the forecast was an attempt . . . to get him to approve tax increases to reduce the deficit." The White House economic boffins must be brought to heel so that the "forecasts" on which the President premises his 1984 budget do not project too garish a deficit. (Maybe he should appoint a commission to write his budget.)

Still another conclave of savants, the bipartisan Commission on Social Security Reform, is supposed to issue its long-awaited "independent" recommendations this week—after extensive private consultations with the President on politically palatable reforms. The commission was appointed in hopes that its prestige would buffer the medicine and soften the Administration's reputation of being anti-Social Security.

The new Congress, already vocal about the Administration's sins of omission, should avoid its sins of commissions.

HOLY MEN
Christopher Hitchens

WILL THE P.L.O. OPT FOR PEACE?
Dilip Hiro

LIBERAL FRATRICIDE
Robert Sherrill

W.P.A. GUIDE
Frederika Randall

CANNON ON REAGAN
John B. Judis

'READ ALL ABOUT IT!'
Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

DEATH CAME ON HOLIDAY

OF POLITICS AND DEATH'S DOMINION

EARL SHORRIS

You are going to die. Forgive me for saying so, but you are going to die. And so am I.

Death kindly came on holiday with me, as Emily Dickinson might have said. Death traveled in my arteries and in my wounded heart.

The chances are eighteen in a hundred that you'll die within the next twelve months, the cardiologist said. Combat soldier's odds. The last time I went to Aqueduct I came home with a pocketful of money, and every horse I bet paid better than five to one.

Sitting beside the sea, no longer self-sufficient as a bird, a fish, a crustacean, now having become a medicated man, I remember the night of the attack. Death gets a terrible, crushing grip upon the heart, but even if it can be made to let go of the heart, it will never leave the head.

One morning a school of bluefish drove a school of minnows close to the rocks where I sat. The gulls came and hovered just above the waves. Their legs were extended, their wings were beating the air, they screamed as they killed the fish with their talons. On the subject of death, birds of prey are more expert than philosophers. Birds do not tell, they show. They teach sudden death. I do not know whether to attend their school.

Philippe Ariés: "What today we call the good death, the beautiful death, corresponds exactly to what used to be the accursed death: the *mors repentina et improvisa*, the death that gives no warning. 'He died tonight in his sleep: He just didn't wake up. It was the best possible way to die.' "

Ariés could be wrong: accursed death may have

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LETTERS.

'RECREATING' THE WEST BANK

Hartsdale, N.Y.

There is an important historical dimension to the Israeli settlement policy that Lesley Hazleton decries ["The Israelis' 'Irreversible' Settlements," *The Nation*, Dec. 18].

Israel is not so much creating settlements in the West Bank regions of Judea and Samaria as it is *re*creating them. The reason that there were no Jews living in those areas when Israel won them from Jordan in the 1967 war is that Arab pogromists had massacred or expelled all the Jews of Hebron and other areas in 1929. Subsequent Arab rulers—the "moderate" King Hussein of Jordan foremost among them—barred Jews from living there. In the United States, preventing someone from living in the neighborhood of his or her choice on the basis of race or religion would be called bigotry. That should apply to the Arab Archie Bunkers of the Middle East as well.

If Israel were to bar Jews from settling in their ancestral homeland, the territories of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, it would be engaging in anti-Jewish discrimination and granting de facto approval to the Arab pogroms of 1929.

By allowing a Jewish return to these areas from which Jews were violently expelled fifty years ago, Israel is rectifying a historical injustice. *Rafael Medoff*

HAZLETON REPLIES

New York City

Prejudice is not the prerogative of any one side. The modern history of the Middle East is a century-long tale of rights claimed and wrongs done on all sides. To continue acting in the present on the basis of these rights and wrongs will insure continuing warfare and continuing prejudice. Making peace can only be a matter of compromise between mutually contradictory rights, not of perpetuating claims of absolute rights. The present Israeli government's policies of West Bank settlement is designed to insure that no such compromise will be possible. *Lesley Hazleton*

FOR AN ALLIED A.C.L.U.

Sherman Oaks, Calif.

George Slaff's report in *The Nation* ["A.C.L.U. and Unions," Dec. 25] that the national board of the A.C.L.U. refused to consider a resolution committing it to deal with "unionized suppliers of goods and services where available" deeply shocked me. The fact that the board would not discuss the issue is, in a sense, even more disturbing than if it had debated and voted the resolution down.

I remember with respect the steadfastness of the late A.L. Wirin and other Southern California A.C.L.U. stalwarts (including George Slaff) in the face of the intense pressures of McCarthyism. It is dismaying to see the banner the A.C.L.U. has so vigorously waved in the past lowered and tucked away.

I am writing on a matter of principle, not one of personal interest. It is highly unlikely that the members of the union to which I belong would ever be asked to supply "goods and services" to the A.C.L.U.

Alfred L. Levitt

FOR AN INDEPENDENT A.C.L.U.

Pomona, Calif.

I thank *The Nation* for airing George Slaff's differences with the national board of the A.C.L.U. in the inauguration of the new department, "All in the Family." Private correspondence with Slaff regarding his position has not quieted my reservations about it.

The issue is not whether the A.C.L.U. "deals with unionized suppliers of goods and services" to recognize the "battles in the labor movement for the right to organize" and to advance civil liberties and rights. The issue is whether the A.C.L.U. should abandon its image as protector of the Bill of Rights by embracing a segment of the American political community, some of whose members are in general agreement with A.C.L.U. aims and policies.

I find it difficult to believe that an officer of the A.C.L.U. or any of its responsible employees, lacking a resolution of the national board endorsing unionized suppliers, would deliberately favor a supplier hostile to the civil liberties and rights of workers over one that is unionized.

I do not support abandonment of the A.C.L.U.'s impartiality, objectivity and, yes, zeal in protecting those same civil liberties and rights. I recoil at the picture of the A.C.L.U. with its arm around American Labor as much as I would at the picture of it with its arm around a political party or a religion. The A.C.L.U., political parties, religions, ethnic minorities and others have much in common worth defending. But there is also much the A.C.L.U. and its friends do not share. The A.C.L.U. must remain aloof to remain in touch with all.

Louis M. St. Martin

O'CONNOR'S FEDERALISM

New Haven, Conn.

Owen Fiss and Geoffrey Aronow offer an incisive critique of recent liberal Supreme Court "victories" ["The High Court: Illusion of Victory," *The Nation*, Dec. 18], but their picture of the legal landscape seems unnecessarily dark. Their pessimism may stem in part from a misunderstanding of one of the newest voices of the judicial right: that of Sandra Day O'Connor. In discussing her now-familiar dissent in the *FERC* case, Fiss and Aronow conflate her vision of federalism with that of William Rehnquist. This error obscures a theory that offers both a more circumscribed alternative to Rehnquist's own and a foundation for future retrenchment in the area of states' rights.

O'Connor's dissent is best known for its exposition of "the most valuable aspects of our federalism." Surveying the benefits conferred by a strong system of state governments, she emphasizes two that are mentioned only fleetingly in earlier opinions. The states, she contends, provide a "laboratory" for the development of new social, economic and political ideas," and they "enhance the opportunity of all citizens to participate in representative government." What is striking about this account of federalism is its explicitly political nature: those aspects of state sovereignty that merit judicial protection emerge in or from the state legislative process.

This emphasis on political process is not present in Rehnquist's opinion in *National League of Cities*, in which he asserts the states' power to set the wages of their public employees, or—in his own terms—to structure the delivery of essential services. While the opinion contains nothing that contradicts O'Connor's formulation, Rehnquist is not satisfied to define the states in terms of their political process. The states should be sovereign, he insists, not only when they are providing their citizens with an arena for political action, but when they are adjudicating their claims in the court system or providing them with goods and services.

To this far-ranging conception, O'Connor's view offers the possibility of an antidote. It not only takes its bearings from political participation, a value both liberals and conservatives can embrace, but by linking judicial protection of states' rights to the political process—rather than to a diffuse notion of autonomy in all areas of state activity—O'Connor's vision narrows the range of occasions for judicial intervention and provides a principle for limiting the burgeoning concept of state sovereignty.

Kathryn Abrams

CORRECTION

In their December 4 "Dispatches," Kai Bird and Max Holland incorrectly reported the details of Odumegwu Ojukwu's re-entry into Nigerian politics. Pardoned this year for his role in the Biafran secession attempt of the late 1960s, Ojukwu returned from the Ivory Coast and has been campaigning for President Shehu Shagari's National Party of Nigeria.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Looking Forward

It's the time of year when the wire services and the newsmagazines select the "Top Stories of 1982." Rather than wallow in the past, however, we prefer to name the most important stories of the year ahead, so that our privileged readers may make their preparations accordingly. Herewith the view from 1984.

(1) *MX Siting Set.* The special panel looking into basing for the MX missile will merge with the Commission on Social Security Reform and recommend that nursing homes be "hardened" for missiles and guarded by old people who have not reached the retirement age of 95.

(2) *Democratic Presidential Aspirants.* Former Vice President Walter (Fritz) Mondale and Senator Ernest (Fritz) Hollings will chair a meeting of the Democratic National Committee which will decide that only candidates nicknamed Fritz may enter the Democratic primaries. John (Fritz) Glenn, Alan (Fritz) Cranston, Reuben (Fritz) Askew and Gary (Fritz) Hart will immediately announce that they will run.

(3) *Belize Crisis.* Citing Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands as a precedent, Guatemala will attack neighboring Belize, and Britain, which guarantees Belize's security, will dispatch its navy to the Caribbean. Torn between his loyalty to Guatemalan strongman Gen. Efrain Rios Montt and his devotion to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, President Reagan will order a full blockade of Nicaragua.

(4) *Kennedy Divorce.* Senator Edward Kennedy will win a

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Vatican annulment of his marriage to Joan Kennedy on the grounds of irreconcilable backache. At a subsequent press conference, Kennedy will squelch rumors that he is again a Presidential candidate but point out that "Fritz" is the German equivalent of "Teddy."

(5) *Bulgarian Plot.* Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, will charge in its monthly *Reader's Digest* column that Bulgaria is plotting the assassination of the editorial staff of *Commentary*.

(6) *Literary Award to Fonda.* Jane Fonda will be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for *The Jane Fonda Workout Book*. She will donate the money to the campaign fund of her husband, State Representative Tom (Fritz) Hayden.

(7) *E.P.A. Time Bomb.* The Environmental Protection Agency will announce that the Rayburn House Office Building is located atop a toxic-waste dump, but Anne Gorsuch will withhold cleanup funds until the House drops its contempt action against her.

Runners-Up: Deadly Poisonous Fumes from Chemical Explosions Wipe out Several Parishes in Louisiana; Also State of New Jersey. Buses Plunge in Peru. Gurus Levitate in Oregon. Stock Market Levitates/Plunges.

New Right Flop

Now that the 97th Congress has concluded its business, it is appropriate to examine its record and see how well it managed to translate the agenda of the New Right into law. After all, the 97th Congress represented probably the high point of the New Right's electoral power: the 1982 elections diminished its strength in the new Congress and, unless economic miracles happen in the next two years, it will be even weaker after 1984. If the New Right could not succeed last session, it is unlikely that it can do so in the near future.

The record shows that the New Right legislative onslaught was a dismal failure.

Only one important piece of legislation infringing civil liberties was enacted by the 97th Congress—the Intelligence Identities Protection Act—and that was not so much a triumph of the New Right as a failure of civil libertarians to persuade their usual allies that vital freedoms were at stake. Though the law directly limits what the media may say, few in the communications industry crusaded against it—and civil liberties are seldom successfully defended when those whose rights are threatened do not speak out in their own behalf.

The core of the New Right agenda was the undermining of Supreme Court decisions that protect civil rights and civil liberties—particularly those on abortion, school prayer and busing. In addition, the New Right aimed to pass the Family Protection Act and establish some counterpart of the old House Committee on un-American Activities, possibly under the antiterrorism banner. On all counts, though it tried mightily, it came up empty-handed.

Ironically, the only law that altered a Supreme Court decision on civil liberties was the extension of the Voting Rights Act—and that served to redress a racial injustice and expand civil freedoms. In 1980, the Court in *City of Mobile v. Bolden* had held that a local voting system was permissible unless it could be shown that it was designed with a discriminatory intent. This Congress made it the law that discriminatory *effect* is sufficient grounds to overturn an electoral practice even when discriminatory *intent* cannot be shown. It also extended the provisions of the Voting Rights Act for twenty-five years and approved the controversial "pre-clearance" section, which requires certain states and localities to get Justice Department approval before making any election-rule changes. This was an overwhelming victory for civil libertarians and a setback for various forces connected to the New Right.

The New Right's favorite—and most pernicious—method of attacking the Supreme Court was to try to enact laws stripping the Federal benches of authority to rule on certain social issues. Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Bennett Johnston of Louisiana managed to steer a court-stripping bill on busing through the Senate, but it never reached the floor of the House; Helms's drives to enact court-stripping measures on abortion and school prayer never even passed the Senate (though, to be sure, their defeats were narrow). This was as close as the New Right ever got to passing anything on its agenda.

It is true that President Reagan's special contribution to the New Right docket—destruction of the Federally funded Legal Services Corporation—fared a trifle better. Though the corporation was by no means dismantled, its funding was reduced by a fourth and Reagan was able to saddle it with a leadership hostile to its stated mission. The prospects for preserving the program have improved lately, however, thanks to the exposure of the greed of some of the appointees. Congress reacted with fitting outrage, though it remains to be seen if that will be translated into added strength for the program in the current session.

The failure of the New Right didn't "just happen." It took a great deal of effort. Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut deserves to be singled out. Whether one supported him in his campaign against Toby Moffett, there is no doubt that one of the shining spots in his record was his extended—and frequently lonely—battle against the court-stripping bills. Among other members of Congress who fought effectively against the New Right program, Senator Bob Packwood of Oregon and Representative Don Edwards of California were particularly noteworthy.

The battle against the New Right in Congress is not over, of course. Renewed efforts to adopt its agenda will undoubtedly be made. Yet on previous occasions in American history when religious and political fundamentalists have been embarrassed politically, they have tended to withdraw from the public arena. That is likely to happen again.

This does not mean, however, that all will be well for civil liberties in the 98th Congress. The Freedom of Information Act is threatened, especially in its application to intelligence agencies. Civil liberties could be seriously abridged by the Reagan Administration's anticrime package. Congress will probably revise the immigration laws, limiting access to

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judicial review and restricting the rights of refugees.

Ironically, the defeat of New Right legislation in this past session may hinder civil libertarians in their efforts to defeat such measures in the new session. For one lesson learned is that a certain amount of Congressional and public support can be mustered against bills closely identified with the New Right. The task for the next two years is to make sure that such support will not wither when antilibertarian measures with broader, centrist backing are offered.

Holy Men

Having just passed the bizarre time of year when even the secular and the profane pay their respects to the sacred, it seems appropriate to consider our two latest holy men. Mahatma Gandhi is pulling the crowds into a bland movie about the virtues of ascetic nonviolence. And Father Maksymilian Kolbe has recently been canonized as the Catholic Church's latest twentieth-century saint. To millions of people it seems persuasive that these two characters led moral—even model—lives. The Indian government (which subsidized Sir Richard Attenborough, the producer of *Gandhi*, to the tune of several million dollars) and the Vatican have certainly invested a great deal in the promotion of that belief.

Gandhi, to give him his due, never proclaimed himself a saint. But he did insist on the subordination of man to God in all things. He taught that sexual intercourse should be solely for the propagation of children (ideal advice for the Indian subcontinent). He was opposed to all forms of modern technology and machinery, and condemned whole tracts of his country to the medieval spinning wheel. If his advice on nonresistance to Japanese militarism had been followed, the Hirohito empire (itself led by a man believed to be divine) would have taken years longer to dislodge.

Gandhi preached against friendship because it tended to weaken the adoration of God, and his memoirs show that he would have let his children die rather than nourish them with meat when they were dangerously ill. In many ways, India's postcolonial legacy of backwardness and underdevelopment is a gift from Gandhi, and if he had not been an apparently sincere pacifist we would more easily recognize the traits he shares with Khomeini.

Even as a pacifist, Gandhi was a hypocrite. He condemned Bengali rioters in the same breath that he condemned the British soldiery who shot them in cold blood. He imagined that Japanese fascism would hardly be worse than British colonialism. He knew, when he went on his hunger strikes, that there would be murderous disorder if he was allowed to die, and he knew that the British overlords knew this too. His attitude to violence, then, was more "flexible" than modern hagiography supposes.

When Louis Fischer faced him, before the war, with the question of what European Jews could or should do to resist the Nazis "passively," Gandhi smilingly suggested that they should commit collective suicide. This course of action would, he opined, have "aroused the world and the people of Germany to Hitler's violence." The very best that can be said for this view is that it is consistently pacifist. (After all, they *were* going to die anyway.) In a comment on this extraordinary moral confidence, George Orwell wrote that "sainthood is also a thing that human beings must avoid."

The perfect illustration of that adage is to be found in the recent decision of Pope John Paul II to make a saint out of Father Kolbe, the man who volunteered to take the place of a condemned man at Auschwitz. The usual requirements of sainthood (miracles independently attested and all the rest of it) were waived in his case. The Pope, evidently, was anxious to have a Polish saint, and fast.

Perhaps too fast. It emerges that Father Kolbe ran several publications in prewar Poland. One of them was called *Knight of the Immaculate*. (Kolbe was a fanatical worshipper of the Virgin Mary, as is the Pope. Polish devotees of Our Lady believe their country to be under her special protection—in which case the woman has a lot to answer for.) In the first issue of this paper, Father Kolbe wrote that the Freemasons were "an organized clique of fanatical Jews, who want to destroy the church." Addressing the followers of his group, the Militia of the Immaculate, he said:

"Atheistic Communism seems to rage ever more wildly. Its origin can easily be located in that criminal mafia that calls itself Freemasonry, and the hand that is guiding all that toward a clear goal is international Zionism."

That statement was printed in Poland in 1939! Father Kolbe was stoking the very oven in which he was to perish. It may or may not be significant that he gave his life in Auschwitz for a non-Jew.

The Church badly needs a Holocaust saint, because whenever and wherever it could it helped Nazis and Fascists into power. Even the leading Catholic apologist, Paul Johnson, is forced to admit (in his *History of Christianity*) that almost a quarter of the members of the S.S. were practicing Catholics. Not one of them was ever excommunicated or even threatened with the disapproval of "God's deputy on earth." And now the Vatican has canonized, in memory of the wholesale murder of a Biblical people, a man who desired the "elimination" of the Jews from Polish life.

Do we need this? If anthropologists discovered a tribe that boasted a celibate priesthood and a morbid cult of a mysterious virgin, they might raise an eyebrow. Yet even agnostics seem to grant the ideas of sainthood and martyrdom a certain dignity. This may be simply because Lech Walesa goes around invoking Mary at every opportunity. Even so, it hardly excuses the conferring of sainthood on a man who really belonged in the Inquisition. Gandhi, for all his faults, never argued that the Jews *had* to die.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

CHANGES. Andrew Kopkind replaces Associate Editor Kai Bird, who is taking a leave to co-author a book on John J. McCloy. Kopkind has written prolifically on politics and culture for *The Village Voice*, *Working Papers*, *The Washington Post*, etc. And our deep thanks to Kirk Sale, who performed so ably during Richard Lingeman's absence.

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SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

I'll remember 1982 as the year my profession's crisis became big media news and America's newest strategic gap. In November alone, *The New York Times*, *Time* and John Chancellor all decried the "alarming" shortage of American experts on the Soviet Union. Moreover, they warned, the Russians have greatly increased their stockpile of Americanologists.

America seems determined to close this window of vulnerability. Millions of private and Congressional dollars for Sovietology are in the works. I hope some of them actually trickle down into real understanding of Soviet affairs, or to me. But meanwhile, I'll continue to get my own best insights and predictions free from my old Moscow friend, Sasha the Soviet Sovietologist.

Of course, Sasha isn't a professional Sovietologist. (Political analysis is a state monopoly in the Soviet Union.) He works, so to speak, in that vast marketplace of scarce goods located *na levo*, "on the left," as Russians say—that is, anywhere except in state-run stores.

Sasha is known among Muscovites as the man who can "get you *na levo* what you need for what you got"—say, a rebuilt Fiat carburetor for two Elton John albums, or the *Kama Sutra* for a pair of Wrangler jeans. That talent brings Sasha many high Soviet officials as regular clients, which is how he became the best-informed Sovietologist I know.

Don't misunderstand. Sasha is a loyal Soviet citizen. He doesn't like dissidents, for example. "Listen," he explained, "Stalin made 2 + 2 equal 9. Then came Khrushchev, who said 2 + 2 equals 5. But our dissidentchiki protested, 'No, no! 2 + 2 equals 4.' So what happened? Now 2 + 2 equals 7."

Here's a peculiarity of Sasha's Sovietology. A cautious man, he talks politics only in parables and anecdotes. Especially anecdotes, because they remind him how times have changed. Nowadays, you can say anything political if it's anecdotal. But Sasha's father got ten years in Stalin's gulag for telling an anecdote. (Something about God suffering from delusions of grandeur: "He thinks He's Stalin.") Actually, Sasha's father was innocent. He pleaded guilty "because for doing nothing you always got twenty-five years."

So Sasha's an anecdotal Aesop of Sovietology. I see now, for example, that he predicted Andropov's rise to power as early as 1966, when he told me this story. At the Communist Party congress that year, while the 2,000 delegates were dozing during a speech, Andropov learned that a C.I.A. agent was somewhere in the hall. He personally apprehended the agent in ten minutes. The Politburo was amazed by this feat. Andropov explained: "It was simple, comrades. I remembered what Lenin taught us: 'The enemy never sleeps!'"

Incidentally, Sasha confirms the report that the K.G.B. was considerably modernized under Andropov. "Now our security men always travel in threes. One can read. One can write. And the other is there to keep an eye on these two intellectuals."

Sasha is an equally astute analyst of other Soviet developments. He was the first to advise me that the Soviet Union couldn't compete with the United States in space. A *na levo* client, a high-level space official, told Sasha confidentially of a plan to land Soviet cosmonauts on the sun. When Sasha worried that they'd burn up, the official replied indignantly: "You think we're stupid? They'll land at night!"

Analyzing the silver ruble that was minted in 1967, featuring Lenin pointing two raised hands toward Communism, Sasha also foresaw the alarming growth of Soviet alcoholism in the 1970s. "Look closely. Comrade Lenin's fingers point clearly to 11 A.M. He's reminding us when the liquor stores open!"

Naturally, Sasha gives particular analytical attention to consumer problems. Back in 1969, when Moscow shops were relatively well-stocked, he predicted the food shortages of the 1980s. It seems that another elite client, a butcher, had received "classified information on how to make sausages without meat."

For business reasons, Sasha is strongly pro-détente and therefore he analyzes foreign affairs as well. When the American hostages were in Iran and Washington was refusing to sell grain to Moscow while protesting Soviet treatment of Sakharov, Sasha even devised a *na levo* plan to resolve the crisis.

"We'll trade Sakharov to Washington for the Shah. Then we'll trade the Shah to Teheran for the hostages. Then we'll give the hostages to Carter for grain." Sasha still thinks his plan would have saved Carter's Presidency and détente.

At bottom, though, Sasha is pessimistic about world affairs. On the day of the invasion, he predicted that Soviet troops would be in Afghanistan many years. "It will take them that long," he said, "to find the government that invited them."

Like most Russians, Sasha is morbidly anti-Chinese. He completely discounts current rumors of an impending Sino-Soviet rapprochement. In fact, Sasha just learned of a secret exchange of cables between the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and Andropov.

Deng Xiaoping cabled urgently: "CHINESE PEOPLE STARVING. SEND FRATERNAL FOOD!" Andropov replied: "NEED ALL FOOD FOR SOVIET PEOPLE. TIGHTEN BELTS." Deng Xiaoping cabled back: "SEND BELTS!"

Sasha has read Orwell, so I asked him what the world would be like in 1984. Unlike American Sovietologists, Sasha eschews rash predictions. He made only one: "All will be quiet on the Finnish-Chinese border."

As you've probably guessed, I've tried to persuade Sasha to bring his Sovietology to the United States. He refused. "First, there's a fundamental difference between capitalism and socialism. Under capitalism, you have the exploitation of man by man. Here, it's the other way around."

"Moreover," Sasha continued, "I wrote to my cousin, who emigrated to Queens ten years ago, to ask if he's set up yet in America. He isn't. He's still working."

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ARTICLES.

NEW PRESSURES ON ARAFAT

Will the P.L.O. Now Opt for Peace?

DILIP HIRO

London

The next session of the Palestine National Council, the governing assembly of the Palestine Liberation Organization, will be the most crucial in its eighteen-year history. But so far the date and even the location are undecided, as a result of serious practical and tactical problems.

As to the site, one faction favors Tunis, where both the P.L.O. and the Arab League have their headquarters, the other prefers Damascus, where many members of the P.L.O.'s executive committee live; Algiers may be chosen as the compromise site. And as to timing, the council membership was expanded from 120 to 520 seats only last November, and the eight political bodies and ten popular organizations (of workers, women, students, journalists, lawyers, doctors and so on) that make up the council are still in the process of electing their representatives.

All this uncertainty seems to suit Yasir Arafat, the P.L.O. chieftain, who is in no particular hurry to decide between moderation and militancy in responding to the Reagan peace proposals and charting a new course for the organization in the wake of its forced departure from Lebanon. But the pressures in the area are building rapidly, and he may not have the luxury of waiting much longer.

By far the most significant issue he faces—one certain to come before the P.N.C.—is whether finally to seek peace with Israel and recognize its right to exist. This would obviously be a wrenching departure from past policy, but the prevailing mood among P.L.O. leaders seems to be in favor of the P.N.C. moving in that direction.

One very important source of pressure for this shift in P.N.C. policy is the Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories—the West Bank and Gaza. On November 9, at a secret and so far unreported meeting in the offices of *Al Quds*, an Arabic daily in Jerusalem, these leaders signed a document calling for the P.L.O. to recognize Israel's right to exist. Such an initiative, taken by a prominent group of Palestinians independently of the P.L.O.'s central leadership, is unprecedented.

The move is symptomatic of two major developments.

First, having lost its impressive administrative, political, military and propaganda organization in Beirut, the P.L.O. is no longer able to offer day-to-day guidance to the populations of the occupied territories, as it did for more than a decade. The resumption of Voice of Palestine broadcasts from the distant capitals of Algeria, Iraq and North and South Yemen—and the publication of the official P.L.O. weekly in Cyprus—are poor substitutes for the Beirut operations.

Second, the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza are the direct victims of Israel's occupation policy and its accelerating settlement movement. Unless some accommodation with Israel is reached soon, they fear, they will be completely absorbed.

More than half of the land on the West Bank has already been acquired by Israeli agencies or individuals. In December the Begin government announced that it would increase the present 103 settlements in the West Bank by 35 and double the number of settlers from 25,000 to 50,000 in three months. In addition, 82,000 Israelis are living in some 40,000 apartments in and around Arab Jerusalem.

Meron Benvenisti, the former Labor deputy mayor of Jerusalem, reckons that the Israeli occupation policy will soon lead to "Arab ghettos, surrounded by Israeli dormitory towns, agrarian colonies and Jewish military settlements." Last October, addressing the settlers at a new Jewish colony in a Nablus suburb, Mordechai Zipori, the Israeli communications minister, said, "Don't worry about the demographic density of the Arabs. When I was born in Petaeh Tikva [in Israel], we were entirely surrounded by Arab villages. They have all since disappeared."

Israel is applying a varied set of measures to eradicate the Palestinian character of the West Bank. The pace of repres-

DRAWINGS BY SEYMOUR CHWAST

Dilip Hiro, who writes regularly on Middle Eastern affairs for a number of British publications, including the New Statesman, *is the author of* Inside the Middle East *(McGraw-Hill).*

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sion has quickened. The incidence of arrest, surveillance, interrogation and expulsion is greater than ever, and universities are being closed and houses razed at a faster rate.

The economic absorption of the West Bank has reached a point where 90 percent of all imports are from Israel. Half of all salaried West Bank residents now work for Jewish employers in Israel. Palestinian farmers are being squeezed off their land by a deliberate withholding of irrigation water by the Israeli military. In the absence of any other reasonable alternative, they are likely to choose the "Jordanian option'—a West Bank federated with Jordan—if only to escape Israeli colonization.

Since Israeli banks—the only ones allowed in the West Bank—generally deny credit to Palestinians, Palestinian enterprises are in decline. Last June an Israeli military order banned the importation of all foreign currencies, thus blocking what is said to be as much as $70 million raised by outside Palestinians for public works in West Bank towns.

It is this state of affairs which has repeatedly led Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem, to urge that the P.L.O. accept the Reagan plan, beginning with the recognition of Israel. "At the rate the West Bank is being integrated into Israel, in two or three years' time there will be nothing left to negotiate," he says. Agreeing with this view, King Hussein too has backed the Reagan plan.

It will be no easy matter for the P.N.C. to agree on a resolution moving toward peace with Israel and recognizing its right to exist. For one thing, it would run directly counter to the charter the P.N.C. adopted in 1964. That charter rests on four basic principles: Israel was established by force and is therefore illegal; Palestinian Arabs are the true inhabitants of Palestine; Palestinians should liberate by force what was taken from them by force; and other Arabs should support them in their struggle. Of the charter's thirty-three articles, the P.N.C. would have to alter or remove eleven, including those declaring: "Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit"; "The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal"; "The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate for Palestine, and everything that has been based upon them, are deemed null and void"; and "The Arab Palestinian people . . . reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine."

For another thing, it is not likely that the West Bank Palestinians will be able to back their case with their allotted number of votes—and a two-thirds vote is necessary. Since the P.L.O. is illegal in the occupied territories and Israeli authorities will not give travel documents to its known representatives, almost all of the 180 seats assigned to P.N.C. organizations in the territories will be unoccupied. This will leave the way clear for Palestinians not so directly under the Israeli gun to speak against the recognition of Israel—arguing, as they have in the past, that making unilateral concessions leads not to compromise but to capitulation, as in the case of Sadat's giving in to Israeli demands for recognition and then failing to get Israel even to begin negotiating on Palestinian autonomy.

Nonetheless, there is strong support for a peace initiative in other quarters outside the West Bank. Many P.L.O. leaders feel that a resolution showing the Palestinians' readiness to negotiate would embarrass the Begin government, forcing it to become even more isolated from the international community, and would increase the P.L.O.'s standing in Europe and the United States. Such a move would also enable the P.L.O. to reassert its diplomatic independence from the rest of the Arab world, thus frustrating the ambitions of rulers like Syria's Assad and Jordan's Hussein to replace the P.L.O. at the negotiating table.

Moreover, those who would oppose the initiative—particularly the Saiqa, a radical pro-Syrian faction, the Arab Liberation Front, a pro-Iraqi group, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—have been weakened by the expulsion of the P.L.O. from Lebanon and have lost considerable support among Palestinians. And one of the traditionally hard-line factions—the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Marxist group led by Nayef Hawatmeh—has come out with a more flexible position: "It's time to abandon the dream for the reality," Hawatmeh has said, "because myths can lead to catastrophe." Hawatmeh has been successful in the past in pushing moderation: it was he who won Arafat over to a resolution at the 1974 P.N.C. session saying the P.L.O. would settle for a ministate "over part of the Palestinian

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territory that is liberated," meaning the West Bank and Gaza.

The dilemma facing Arafat is profound—and that is why he seems to be in no hurry to call the P.N.C. session together. In the meantime he is covering all fronts—one week agreeing to chair a joint Palestinian-Jordanian committee in Amman, the next condemning "all American and Zionist projects and initiatives" in Aden. He is doing what he does best: walking a tightrope. □

A LOOK AT THE NEW COALITION

On the Long Road Toward Phnom Penh

JACQUES BEKAERT

Bangkok

When the shell exploded, a couple of hundred yards from us, the soldiers I was with did not bother to stop or take cover or even look around. For them, the whistle and blast of Vietnamese shells is—like the heavy rain, the sticky mud, the evergreen jungle—all part of the routine.

For the 1,500 soldiers of the MOULINAKA—the Movement of National Liberation of Kampuchea—life is more tedious than exciting. They live with hunger and sickness daily. Only rarely do they come in contact with Vietnamese troops, only rarely is the fighting fierce. If a battle is bloody enough it will warrant a few lines in the Bangkok papers, but for the most part these men are among the forgotten soldiers of a war that no one likes and few pay attention to.

The MOULINAKA is one of the three factions that make up the National Sihanoukist Army, a force of perhaps 5,000 men loyal to former Kampuchean leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Together with the 9,000 soldiers of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front under former Sihanouk adviser Son Sann and the 25,000 men of the Khmer Rouge, the Communist force led by former dictator Pol Pot, they form the armed opposition to the Vietnamese puppet regime that now rules Kampuchea. And since last June, when these three disparate and often disputatious groups agreed to set up a coalition government-in-exile, these troops have been fighting a stepped-up campaign against the Vietnamese soldiers who occupy their homeland.

"This is our hospital," says Col. Nhem Sophon, the MOULINAKA commander, pointing to a small building. It does indeed have a red cross on its side and a few primitive beds, but there is no medicine other than a few containers of aspirin. "More than half our people are sick," he adds sorrowfully. Tropical diseases are rife, malaria the most common.

Most of the guns in the MOULINAKA camp, in a clear-

Jacques Bekaert is a roving correspondent for The Nation, *a newspaper in Bangkok.*

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ing near the border with Thailand where the resistance forces are strongest, are Chinese. Last March the Sihanouk soldiers received a shipment from China of enough weapons for 3,000 men, including the AK-47 rifles that seem to be ubiquitous in this area.

"It is very reliable," Chak Sarik tells me, tapping his rifle. Once Prince Sihanouk's chief of protocol, Sarik is now the MOULINAKA's political spokesman and a budding marksman. When the Khmer Rouge took over Kampuchea in April 1975, Sarik fled the country and settled in the United States. Two years ago he returned to Kampuchea and joined the Sihanouk forces along the western border. Once prosperous, today he could probably fit his possessions in a knapsack. There are many like him in this region, intellectuals and politicians and businessmen learning the hard way the basic facts of guerrilla warfare.

The strange coalition that Sarik is fighting for is united perhaps in nothing but its desire to drive the Vietnamese out of Kampuchea. In that, it expresses the feelings of a majority of Kampucheans.

It was in December 1978 that Vietnam decided to invade Kampuchea and remove the brutal Khmer Rouge government of Pol Pot. Relations between the two countries had long been tense, and Pol Pot's sympathy for China made Kampuchea a potentially dangerous ally for Peking's territorial ambitions. The fact that many Kampucheans were suffering under the Khmer Rouge regime and world opinion was beginning to turn against it as its cruelties became known gave Hanoi confidence that an invasion would be welcomed both from within and without.

Three months later Pol Pot was indeed deposed, his army badly battered and reduced to occupying a few enclaves along the Thai border. And the Vietnamese troops were indeed first greeted as liberators by the Kampuchean populace. But, because of pressure from China and the five countries of the ASEAN alliance (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines), the new Vietnamese puppet regime gained diplomatic recognition from almost no one (among non-Communist nations, only India) and was not allowed to claim the Kampuchean seat in the United Nations.

In the three years since, opposition to the puppet regime has been sporadic but it has grown, culminating in the formation of the tripartite coalition last June.

Of the coalition partners, the best organized is the National Liberation Front. It was begun in 1976 as the Association of Overseas Kampucheans by a small group of intellectuals living in France opposed to the Khmer Rouge government. It picked as its leader Son Sann, a man who had been one of Sihanouk's closest collaborators, a former Prime Minister, and founder and governor of the National Bank of Cambodia. Sann had publicly dissociated himself from both the Pol Pot regime and the republican government of Lon Nol, which was established after Sihanouk's overthrow in 1970, but he had not rallied to the Sihanouk government-in-exile and was seen as an independent nationalist.

Son Sann and his allies decided to launch a guerrilla war against the Khmer Rouge along the Thai border, and they secured the services of a former Lon Nol general, Dien Del, to lead it. But it was not until the Vietnamese invasion that their project gained a secure foothold: Thailand, worried about its proximity to the large Vietnamese Army in Kampuchea (reportedly 200,000 men), gave Son Sann's forces easy access to the border. Just across the border into Kampuchea, in a small village called Phum Sokh Sann (Village of Peace), the National Liberation Front was formally begun on October 9, 1979.

At the time the N.L.F. had fewer than 2,000 armed men and another few thousand civilian supporters. Aid was slow in coming. China, always interested in opposition to the Vietnamese, supplied some weapons, but most of its support went to the Khmer Rouge. It was not until 1981 that the first substantial shipment of arms came from Peking, and this has been followed by other deliveries. Today the N.L.F. claims close to 9,000 men in arms and control of more than 140,000 civilians, a tribute not only to Chinese support but to the perseverance of Son Sann and his friends.

Prince Sihanouk's contribution to the coalition is based on the National Sihanoukist Army and a political party known as the FUNCIPEC (an acronym for the United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia).

Sihanouk has been a long time coming around to an alliance with other exiles. For nearly two years after the Vietnamese invasion he tried to work out a peaceful settlement with Hanoi. He wrote three letters to his old comrade Pham Van Dong, the Vietnamese Premier, proposing to discuss the future of Kampuchea as friends. He argued that although most of his compatriots preferred the Vietnamese to the bloody Khmer Rouge—he himself had no love for the Khmer Rouge, which killed five of his children—they would eventually grow restless under foreign dominance; Vietnam should not overextend its stay, he said, or it would create the impression that it was planning to make Kampuchea a colony. "Pham Van Dong never answered my letters," Sihanouk told me in 1981. "The third one came back unopened."

Deeply disappointed, in 1980 the Prince turned to the United States, asking for enough money and weapons for an army of 100,000 men. "I had no desire to fight," he said. "I just wanted to show the Vietnamese it was in everybody's interest to be reasonable and talk. It was also very important to be able to show my people I could protect them against the Khmer Rouge as well as against the Vietnamese." Washington of course had no desire to get involved again in Indochina and declined to give Sihanouk any military aid. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance suggested that he should concentrate instead on finding economic aid for Kampuchean refugees.

Sihanouk set up a government-in-exile in Pyongyang, North Korea, and in March 1981 launched his new party. At the same time he asked Gen. In Tam, a Prime Minister in the Lon Nol regime, to organize an army. Tam set up one force

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known as Oddar Tus in September 1981 in the border area of O'Smach, then made alliances with two other guerrilla forces: the Kreang Mung, led by Toun Chhay, a former aeronautic engineer active in the resistance since 1975, and the MOULINAKA, founded in August 1979 by a captain in Sihanouk's navy, Kong Sileah, and now under the command of Nhem Sophon.

The third part of the coalition, the Khmer Rouge, is still led by the same people who formed the Phnom Penh government in 1976—Pol Pot, Ta Mok, Son Sen and Ke Pauk. In December 1981 they announced they were putting an end to the Communist Party which they had used as their political arm, but recent intelligence reports indicate that the party, by whatever name, is alive and well.

Until last year, the Khmer Rouge had resisted the idea of a coalition, preferring to rely on its allies in Peking. But in negotiations last spring, Son Sann gave up most of his original demands and agreed to let the Khmer Rouge have the important post of foreign minister, as well as the vice presidency, in a coalition government-in-exile. The Khmer Rouge leaders must also have realized that they were not gaining in popularity among Kampucheans—even if their crimes have been exaggerated by Vietnamese propaganda, hardly anyone wants to see them back in power—and by joining with the nationalist forces they would gain the appearance of respectability they had long sought.

For their part, although there is no feeling of warmth toward the Khmer Rouge, the two nationalist groups realized that through a coalition they would gain the stature they need in order to be formally recognized by other governments and to receive military and economic assistance openly. (The coalition agreement stipulates, however, that each of the three groups gets to keep for itself any aid that comes in specifically earmarked for one or another of them.) Sihanouk became president of the new government, making him at least technically a head of state—even without much of a territory—and enabling him more easily to use his considerable political connections, especially among Third World leaders. Son Sann was willing to remain in the background as a kind of *éminence grise.*

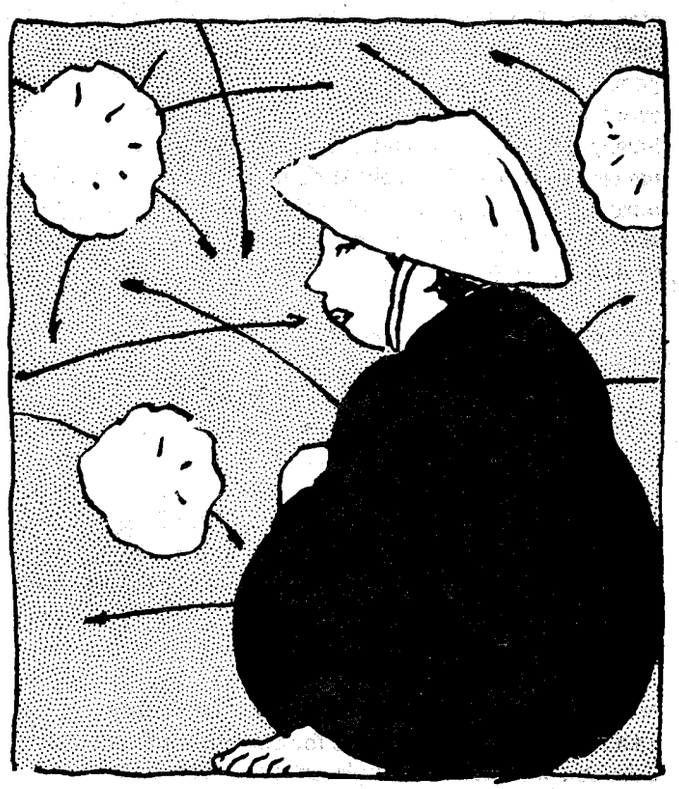
"This coalition is not my dream," Sihanouk told me a few days after the official inauguration of the coalition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last June 22. "I have always favored an alliance between the nationalists, between Son Sann and myself. But nowhere could we find real support for such an idea. We have been forced into this coalition. It is for us to make the best of it."

Sihanouk knows that an alignment with the Khmer Rouge has its problems. "But our people are increasingly worried about the Vietnamese presence in our country," he said. "And by now we know the Khmer Rouge. They will always be isolated, with no real support among the people. For the time being, we have no choice but to include them." He did not need to add that with its 25,000 soldiers and its close ties to China, the Khmer Rouge represents the main guerrilla threat to the Vietnamese.

Sihanouk nonetheless still hopes that negotiations with the Vietnamese are possible. "I am always ready to talk to the Vietnamese," he said. "We need a political solution that gives everybody a chance to save face." He is even willing to give up his present position if that will help. "My position as president of the coalition government is a temporary thing," he told me. "What matters is the supreme interests of my people—their independence, peace and dignity."

Sihanouk and Son Sann both expected that news of the coalition would not be initially well received among exile Kampucheans, but in fact the reception all along the Thai border—and even among fiercely anti-Khmer Rouge refugees in Western countries—has been quite positive. When Sihanouk visited three resistance camps in Kampuchea and one refugee settlement in Thailand last July he was warmly welcomed, and his old charismatic magic was still very effective. As he said later, "The people don't like the Khmer Rouge but they want to see the Vietnamese withdraw from their country."

That is likely to take some time, however, and the cost will be high. Now that the rainy season is over, the Vietnamese may launch a new offensive. A year ago, Vietnamese troops began a successful operation, with attacks on several Khmer Rouge positions and the capture of one N.L.F. village near the border. But then they unexpectedly withdrew, perhaps because their losses were too high or perhaps because of malaria and other diseases. "From a military point of view the Vietnamese could win," said a senior European diplomat recently, speaking of a possible new offensive. "But what matters is the political and diplomatic situation"—and a strong coalition government headed by a popular and skillful man like Sihanouk makes victory on that front difficult indeed for the Vietnamese.



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The Prince is hopeful, but he is not optimistic. As he says, the road to Phnom Penh is a long and hazardous one, and an independent and neutral Kampuchea is still more a dream than a reality. □

'FIRING ON OUR OWN TROOPS'

The Zany Sport of Liberal Fratricide

ROBERT SHERRILL

Something happened during last year's political extravaganza that might leave an outsider who didn't know the awful truth with the idea that liberals have so many authentic heroes and so many solid politicians up front that they can afford to indulge in fratricidal sport.

What I'm referring to is the nasty, running confrontation between Ralph Nader and Representative Toby Moffett, right smack in the middle of Moffett's effort to unseat Republican Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut.

On the face of it, the confrontation—or at least its timing—didn't make sense at all. Moffett and Nader had been close friends for years. At 25, Moffett was Richard Nixon's director of the Office of Students and Youth in the old Health, Education and Welfare Department, but he resigned with fanfare to protest Nixon's bombing of Cambodia. Shortly thereafter, Moffett returned to Connecticut and set up the first statewide Nader organization, the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. Nader wrote the foreword to Moffett's book criticizing the Connecticut legislature, *Nobody's Business*.

In 1974, Moffett out-organized the conservative Democratic establishment in Connecticut to win the party's convention nomination and then trounced the establishment's "old boy" Congressional candidate in the primary. He then beat the Republican nominee and joined the "Watergate baby" class of 1975.

Moffett's career should have been just about all Nader could have wanted. Moffett and Andrew Maguire of New Jersey, also a freshman, led the revolt against the Ford Administration's plan to decontrol both natural gas and crude oil prices. The continuation of controls on crude saved consumers an estimated $60 billion over the next several years. Moffett fought hard, though unsuccessfully, for Nader's Cabinet-level Consumer Protection Agency proposal. He co-sponsored Nader-endorsed legislation to require corporations to admit consumer types to their boards of directors.

Some of Moffett's actions would have to be considered pretty nervy. Although representing a state that is overpopulated with insurance companies, he supported no-fault automobile insurance legislation at the Federal level. Coming from a state with defense contractors such as Sikorsky Aircraft, Electric Boat and United Technologies, Moffett during his House career voted against thirteen of fifteen defense bills—both authorizations and appropriations—as a matter of conscience on the "peace issue." When every major corporation in America was stumping for tax-cut legislation, Moffett voted against the Reagan 10-5-3 business depreciation tax reduction. Moffett, whose state depends on nuclear plants for nearly 40 percent of its electrical power and has a number of nuclear businesses such as Combustion Engineering, helped force through regulations for tougher safety standards, more frequent inspections and improved emergency evacuation plans at nuclear power plants. At a time when most politicians were riding the crest of the deregulation movement, Moffett pressed for Federal Trade Commission rules on the used-car business and the funeral industry, and supported the "Great Television Turn-Off" campaign to improve children's programming.

Admittedly, Moffett was sometimes smug, sometimes lazy; sometimes he played handball in the House gym when he should have been in committee. But all in all, as records in today's Congress go, his was pretty good. In spots, it was super. However, Moffett occasionally took positions that did not please Nader—he had, for example, advocated a 2 percent tax on airplane tickets to subsidize aircraft noise-control equipment—and he failed to take as militant a position on some issues as Nader wanted.

Apparently Nader was still simmering about some of these sins when campaign time rolled around last year, and then Moffett further annoyed him by running for senator rather than for governor. Nader later said he believed that the governor's seat would have been Moffett's "for the asking" and would have given him the "opportunity to significantly transform the nature of Connecticut politics from one dominated by corporate powers to one rooted in creative and constructive citizen involvement."

That was strike two against Moffett. Strike three, by Nader's count, came when, in making his acceptance speech to the state Democratic convention in July, where he was nominated for the Senate by acclamation, Moffett promised to represent corporate as well as consumer interests.

That cut it. Shortly thereafter, in an interview, Nader said he was uneasy about Moffett's "positions on corporate power" and wasn't certain he would endorse his bid for the Senate. Claiming to draw his judgment from some of Moffett's scattershot campaign statements, Nader said, "He's obviously developed different thoughts and priorities. It could be just a facade, it could be a genuine change or it could be a rootlessness in philosophy."

Stung by these comments from his old friend and mentor, Moffett overreacted. He described Nader as "off the wall as far as his political views are concerned. . . . I don't think Ralph can operate in the real world, I don't think he's capable of it. If he thinks I'm going to attack corporate Connecticut in my campaign, he better go back to the drawing board. I admire him and will forever be grateful to him for his leadership on issues. But he is totally irrelevant in the political system."

Robert Sherrill is a Nation *staffer on leave.*

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After that, there were other exchanges; the quarrel grew until it could not be patched, at least not before the election. Along the way Nader called Moffett "an Eastern version of Gary Hart"—meaning, apparently, a sheep in sheep's clothing. While acknowledging that Weicker had an "inadequate record" on oil and atomic energy (actually Weicker has a terrible record) and on consumer protection and the environment, Nader said Weicker had been good on legal services, help for the handicapped, small businesses and education for needy children. He praised Weicker as "a fighter" with "stamina" and clearly implied that Moffett was a coward for not publicly squaring off with John Dingell of Michigan, the blustery chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, on which Moffett sits.

Moffett tried to smother the accusation with a bucket of pragmatism. "I've got fifteen things cooking with this guy [Dingell] of benefit to Connecticut," he said. "Railroads, the hospice, Medicaid, deregulated natural gas—and Nader wants me to go after my chairman. I really don't think Ralph would give a damn if the Japanese took over the insurance industry or Rolls Royce powered every jet plane. I do."

And so it went. Instead of having to run against Weicker only, Moffett found himself also having to run against a much more eloquent foe—Nader—and since he hardly had enough campaign funds to make a good showing against the former, he was at a complete disadvantage in counteracting the latter.

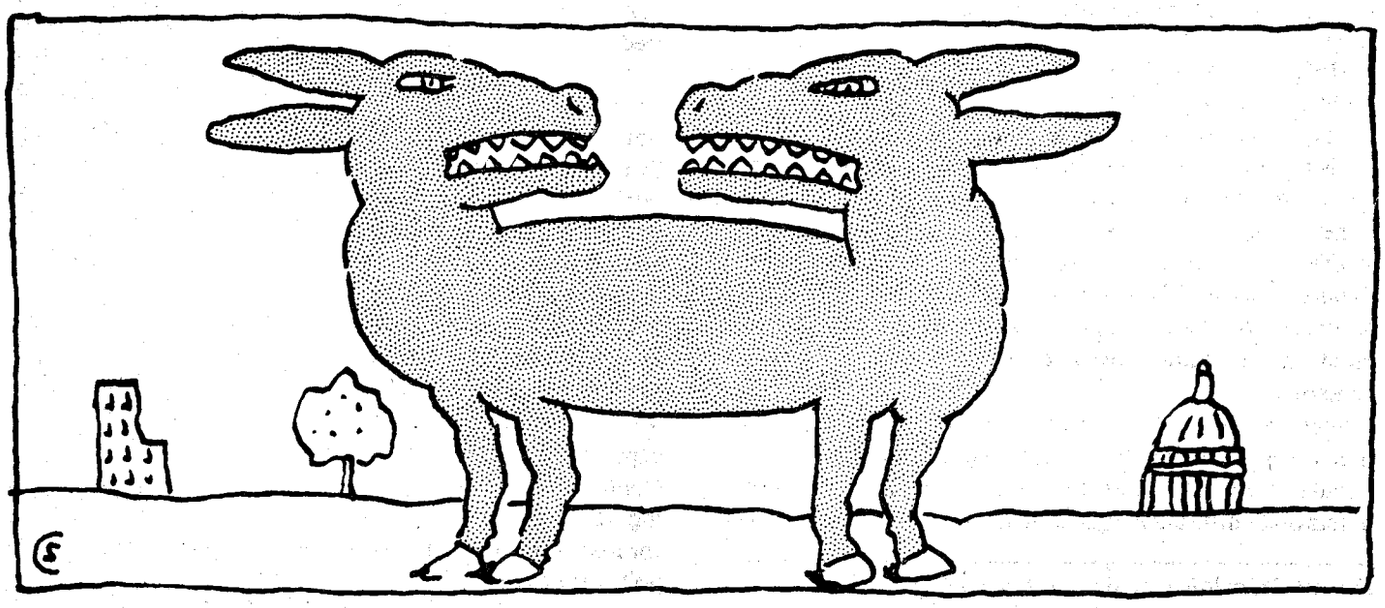
The race was very close. Moffett lost by only 47,000 votes. Nader's attacks can't be blamed for the shortfall, or at least not for all of it: Moffett made a number of serious blunders; he was slow deciding which office he would try for; his campaign was poorly organized; sometimes he goofed off when he should have been campaigning. But Nader is an influential person and it's fair to assume that his criticisms of Moffett gave some voters an excuse for either backing Weicker or staying home on election day. In short, Nader taught his former friend a lesson—but he also helped elect a spotty and, to my way of thinking, very unappealing Republican.

What Nader did, however, was not all that unusual. We liberals have a long and zany tradition of firing on our own troops during campaigns.

Take 1966, for example. Senator Paul Douglas was up for re-election. Douglas was a gore groupie: he was gung-ho for the Vietnam War; for that matter, *any* war turned him on. And he was kook-a-boo in his opposition to the Communist regime in China. But on the domestic economic front—when it came to battling crooked and rapacious corporations—he was a mountain of integrity and strength; nobody else in Congress, except for Senator Phil Hart, could match him. The American consumer could depend on Douglas every time, and boy did we need him. But *The Nation*, understandably caught up in the passions of Vietnam, decided to take the narrow view and stated editorially that it might not be such a bad thing if Douglas were retired by Republican Charles Percy. It's doubtful that this editorial had much influence on the Illinois electorate, but it is on our record and it isn't exactly a bright memory that we ever said anything favorable about the bubblehead who, as the evolutionary result of that election, now presides over the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The same single-track antiwar emotion made thousands of us liberals turn on Hubert Humphrey in 1968. Some got passive revenge against his Vietnam hawkery by staying away from the polling booth. Some sought active revenge. (I was among the latter group, writing a little anti-Humphrey book, *The Drugstore Liberal*. Judging from its sales, I couldn't have cost him more than three or four votes, but that doesn't lessen the stupidity of publishing the book in 1968.) Nobody in politics deserved deflating more than Hubert Humphrey; he was a hypocrite, a blowhard and, in his service to Lyndon Johnson, one of the world's most embarrassing toadies. But there was one thing he wasn't—he wasn't Richard Nixon—and it wouldn't have hurt us to wait until 1969 before going for his throat.

All in all, I think we should admit that our efforts to



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straighten out wayward liberal politicians by helping their Republican opponents have worked about as efficiently as Salem's formula for exorcism. And our efforts to purify the Democratic Party by supporting Republicans have had about the same success.

The best example of that I can think of goes back to the early 1960s, when *The Texas Observer*, a political weekly of considerable influence among the state's liberals, decided to endorse Republican John Tower over the conservative Democratic establishment's candidate for the U.S. Senate. Such was the loyalty engendered by *The Texas Observer* that thousands of its readers acted on its endorsement. The logic was sound: the Republican Party was dead in Texas at the time, but Tower in the Senate might inspire its revival, drawing away conservatives from the Democratic Party and leaving it to the liberals. Besides, we reasoned, Tower would be much easier to defeat when he came up for re-election than would an entrenched conservative Democrat.

Well, it didn't work out that way. To be sure, Tower was elected and the liberal switch-vote (as well as liberals who stayed away from the polls) was credited with putting him into office. But conservatives did not depart the Democratic Party en masse and revive the Republican Party. They went right on running the Democratic Party as they always had, and when the Republicans did finally get going in Texas, there were enough conservatives around to run *both* parties. For all their craftiness, the liberals were still shut out.

As for Tower—who was supposed to be easily unseated in the next election—he's still in the Senate twenty years later and his fat little butt fills the chair of the Armed Services Committee.

The worst thing about these blunders is that they give more ammunition to those who, criticizing us liberals as unrealistic kamikaze purists and Rube Goldberg strategists, insist that the Democratic Party should be left in the hands of "practical" fellows like Robert Strauss. □

Death's Dominion

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

been violent, more like the work of the birds of prey. Dying in one's sleep is no death at all, unless there is no difference between dying and not waking up. How fortunate the fish to have the sensation of the gulls' talons piercing their flesh and organs!

But the thesis of Ariés's book is undoubtedly correct: it would be best to die at home in the peaceful bosom of one's family.

Hours passed before my wife and sons were permitted to enter the tiny room in the coronary care unit. I had planned my admonitions and farewells, but I was feeling better, so I removed the oxygen tube to improve the appearance of my situation and told them jokes instead. The worst was to come. It happened after they left, perhaps because they left, or perhaps it only seemed worse because they weren't there. *Mors repentina et improvisa,* the death of the heart, like the talons that come out of the sky to take the fish in their terrible grasp.

Death changes when considered from the point of view of the dead: many of the subtleties are lost.

I sat by the sea in summer, in the hot sun, in the cool wind. Death was by my side, chilling my toes and the tips of my fingers even in summer, in the hot sun. The bombing of Beirut had begun. I watched the birds killing the fish that came to kill the smaller fish. The fishermen watched the birds with pleasure. They were excited by them. They said the birds were "working." They envied the work of the birds.

Death's poet said:

> A *Wounded* Deer—leaps highest—
> I've heard the Hunter tell—
> 'Tis but the Ecstacy of *death*—

Well, maybe. I'd rather die in bed after using up my admonitions and farewells; it's not ecstatic but it's nice.

Heidegger credited death with causing our individuality. If so, it would seem to happen awfully late in life. Sartre accused him of "sleight of hand." That was in the essay "My Death," written before Sartre was 40 years old.

The trouble with looking death in the eye is that a lot of more or less existential questions do come to mind. Unfortunately, the questions are not put properly; they are felt but not said. Ontology is an imprecise business, full of shivers and images; not for lawyers, perhaps not for philosophers.

Faces appeared to my mind's eye, figures appeared. They were clear, distinct, familiar but unknown. One wore a slightly bloodied meat apron, another wore a straw skimmer, another was pregnant, another sat before the cameras in a television studio. They were not dream figures; they were alive, metaphors alive. I wondered why they existed. Did they know? Were we different, they and I? We were not one and the same. I needed categories, order. What was shown to me? What was I unable to say?

Death is a personal business; whoever speaks of death from a distance speaks lies.

If reason holds while death is in the room, unselfishness occurs. Since one cannot reasonably contemplate what comes after death, there is no choice but to consider those who will be left alive. This moment of unselfishness probably does not come with the same purity to those who expect eternal life. Or have I misunderstood the reasonableness of the idea of eternal life? A man lasts longer than a cheese, but not as long as a rock; isn't that about how it works out?

Imagine outliving the stones of Stonehenge! Imagine being older than the earth! For those who have not made the commitment to the California cult of youth, eternal life has a certain allure. The alternative is too quiet, its prelude too slow for citizens of the society of Atari. Nor has the alternative ever been generally accepted, as any history of at-

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titudes toward death will reveal. We are quite willing to begin as ashes or dust, but we prefer to return to eternal life. Even Socrates, who was not a man to take the easy way out, preferred eternal waking to eternal dust. Or was he merely making his parting easy for his friends to accept? Another instance of the unselfishness of the moment? Since we can't accuse Socrates of telling white lies, we must look elsewhere for an understanding of death.

We will be disappointed.

Precious little has been written about death, and most of that is rubbish, about as illuminating as a undertaker's handwringing or an evangelist's ontology.

They seemed to expect a second attack, for they said again and again to call them if I felt any pain. Myth has it that the second attack is the one that kills. And when it came I believed that it was not death but my death that was in the room with me.

Afterward a nurse stood beside my bed. It was the middle of the night. The lights were dimmed in the hall outside my room. The nurse was in silhouette. I saw her crucifix. I noticed that she did not wear a cap. We sought some common ground for conversation. I asked, "Do you lose many patients from this place?"

"Only those God wants very much," she said.

Until that moment I held out some hope that it might have been a mistake, nothing more than a misleading combination of hypertension and indigestion. But the nurse clarified the situation. Death was not a stranger to her. She knew the fear, and like Emily Dickinson, she knew the difference between fear and despair. On holiday, gone far from the hospital to recuperate, I looked for another philosopher, someone like the nurse.

When asked what he thought about life after death, Vladimir Nabokov is said to have replied that he was more interested in what happened before he was born.

Who was he kidding?

According to Dylan Thomas, "After the first death, there is no other."

Thomas was not acquainted with Elias Canetti, who noted in 1958 the report in an Italian newspaper of the second death of a nun at the age of 100. The nun had first died when she was 17 years old, but had revived miraculously while in her coffin. This notation by Canetti is not exactly in keeping with a thought he put down in 1943: "It will some day turn out that people grow meaner with each death." In 1971 he accused philosophers of giving death more than its due, making life into a process of dying all along, thereby weakening man, urging his surrender, talking him into cowardice (remember Heidegger and Heidegger's politics?). The accusation is one of the few times Canetti raised his voice. I think he deserved the Nobel Prize for his judicious shrillness.

In the Upanishads, Death gives advice on how to achieve immortality, which seems perfectly reasonable until it's considered in a wintry Western head.

It may be that we can learn the most about death by studying the Oxford English Dictionary. There isn't much enlightenment in what the quoted writers said, but the age of the words carries a hint about immortality.

When it comes to death, most writers cheat. Philosophers are the worst, as Canetti said. The smart philosophers don't have much to say about death; they leave it for the cheats. If you really know anything about death, Sartre will make you laugh aloud. Heidegger is almost as comical. Freud seems somehow justified in fainting at Jung's mere mention of the subject. The cosmic heroism of Ernest Becker is more than an earthbound creature like me can understand. In the end, it's Socrates, who didn't know whether death is a good or an evil, to whom I turn for help. He said: "The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death."

"Be of good cheer about death. . .," he said, "no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death."

The issue is returned to the world, to the workplace of poets and novelists. Emily Dickinson. I asked a poet how Emily Dickinson could have known so much about death. She was so young.

We were at a party, a celebration. The poet smiled as she spoke. "In those days people lived close to death," she said.

That day the local newspaper had published photographs and descriptions of the dead and maimed of Beirut. Death comes into my living room, my bedroom. Death lies on the coffee table, spreads itself across the dining room table while the color of tea spreads in my cup. How many deaths did Dickinson know? The body count is vital to understanding now; then it was the buzz of a fly in the room. Then they knew death from the point of view of the dead. That is why they feared the *mors improvisa*.

Bombing is not so bad when considered from the sky. Nor are we much disturbed at the thought of the ancient dead. These distances are important, but none is as important as the distance between death and my death, as John Calvin tells us.

> For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans, VI: 9-11)

It is entirely possible that most of humanity's problems on earth can be traced directly to its inability to settle in a just fashion the issue of death's dominion.

This morning, standing at the edge of the ocean, feeling a south wind, watching the spray of a six-foot sea breaking against the old rock, I felt connected to the eternal, if not yet certain that eternal can mean life. Culture is an ocean made by man, I thought, and turned my face from the wind to laugh.

What is death's dominion?

There could be a left and a right of death; the opportunity for that was clear to Heraclitus: "The waking have one common world, but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own." That was what Heraclitus said, but it waited 2,000 years or so for Calvinism to make a horror of the notion by creating the right of death.

Calvin gave death dominion.

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He put life next after death. He let life be ruled by death.

In his exploration of the effect of Calvinism on social life and economics, Max Weber noted: "This consciousness of divine grace of the elect and holy was accompanied by an attitude toward the sin of one's neighbor, not of sympathetic understanding based on consciousness of one's own weakness, but of hatred and contempt for him as an enemy of God bearing the signs of eternal damnation."

You say Calvin changed the social life of man? Yes, of course, Max. And the economic life? Of course. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Once we understand that time is money and we read a few lines from Baxter and Ben Franklin, we agree. Let Tawney ask his questions, let Brentano carp. Yours is a work of genius, Max; it should be known as a revelation, never mind that it sours forever our taste for modern Western economic life. You did it brilliantly. But your discipline was sociology. What if we held on to what you said and looked in another direction? What of our neighbors? In a life under the sway of death are we isolated from our neighbors? Is there a politics of death?

One wore a slightly bloodied meat apron, another wore a straw skimmer, another was pregnant, another sat before the cameras in a television studio. They were not dream figures. I wondered why they existed. The metaphor was political.

There are many answers to the problem of death. Foremost among them is blunt denial. The unconscious does this. Primitive humans seem not to have believed that death was inevitable, although they weren't quite sure what had happened when a person died of something other than disease or accident or war. Whether humans or animals have some innate awareness of mortality is debatable: elephants seem to go off to graveyards to die, people go to Florida. The ancient Greeks figured that dogs didn't know they were going to die, but they weren't sure whether that meant dogs were mortal or immortal. On the whole, the elephant case seems strongest.

The grimmest answer to the problem of death is that life is so miserable anything would be better. What most people must decide is whether death is the end or not; that is, if we pass on, do we pass on to nothing or something, and if it's something, what is it?

Since we don't know much about death, we are stuck with comparing it to sleep, with or without dreams. Some compare it to doing philosophy, although they don't often compare doing philosophy to going to sleep, which is like dying, according to Plato. Those who say it's a dreamless sleep speak of social, genetic and cultural immortality. The dreamers speak of reincarnation and resurrection.

The ancient Greeks and Hebrews understood life after death as continuance in some vague place of discomfort and darkness deep in the earth. Virgil added specificity, but it awaited Christianity to give immortality as a prize. Kant, whose proof of immortality never really caught on, didn't approve of a system of punishment and reward in the next life. Under that system, he wrote, "most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, few would be done from hope, none from duty. The moral worth of actions, on which alone the worth of the person and even of the world depends in the eyes of supreme wisdom, would not exist at all. The conduct of man, so long as his nature remained as it now is, would be changed into mere mechanism, where, as in a puppet show, everything would gesticulate well but no life would be found in the figures." With Kant's criticism of certainty in mind, the politics of Calvin's giving of life into the hands of death begin to rise above the other issues of the Reformation.

If death is simply surcease, who would choose to live to please death? It is not death but the denial of death that forces the choice. But when death is no more than the moment of embarkation on an endless journey, the quality of that journey becomes a matter of great concern: the life of the dead is longer than the life of the living; it is eternal. Add a final complication: predestination. And complicate the complication by making one's destiny knowable. To what ends would one not go in an attempt to create a happy destiny for himself? Eternity is a long time.

When one denies death by Calvinist beliefs, a politics arises. The only proof of a good destiny is to be revealed in this life as one of the elect of God. And how is it that some are elect and some are not? The elect are rich and the damned are poor. God helps those who help themselves, and so on. It's quite all right to despise the poor and wretched of the earth—and not feel any guilt about it—for it's God who made them poor; it was His choice for now and for all eternity. The politics of Ronald Reagan have profound origins; his mentor is not Calvin Coolidge but John Calvin.

I blame it all on Calvin; he's such an easy target. Death forced politics before Calvin was born and it forces a choice of politics now in those who do not know or do not care about Calvin. A Russian friend claims that *we* have solved the production problem but not the distribution problem, while *they* have solved the distribution problem but not the production problem. He takes that morally superior position instinctively, I think, the Calvinist from Moscow condemning me to history's hell, justifying whatever he may do to me in this life.

People are no better than nations and nations are no better than people. No one courts damnation or annihilation.

What is left for those whose lives on earth prove that they are not the elect of God or history? When life is miserable enough, death is welcome no matter what one's destiny. Such pessimism is not difficult to sell, either in the gulag or the ghetto; it is useful to the elect to crush the spirit of the damned lest they become convinced that God helps those who help themselves.

Do not pity the damned, death advises the elect, the damned are the key to your understanding of eternal life, proof that your death has been denied by God, by salvation. You permit yourself egalitarian notions at your own risk, says death when death is in power; egalitarianism leaves you naked in the presence of death; all egalitarian notions conspire to force you, the once comfortable elect, to question the meaning of your life and the possibility of bleakest death.

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In Weber's social and economic view, the elect are hoarders of time and things, collectors of capital. In the politics of death, the elect are hoarders of meaning. Life is capital, as if the eternal life of the elect were made of unused portions of the lives of the damned, as if it were required that the damned die sooner so that the elect might live on. Simply by defining the poor and wretched as damned, the elect are able to strip their lives of meaning, force them so close to the position of the suicide that they have barely enough strength to keep from taking their own lives. The poor do not revolt against the oppression of the elect because they have been made to despair, not only of this life but of all eternity; the poor belong to death, they are suicides not yet done.

What are the ways in which death gains dominion over human life? Death owes a debt to Calvin, but predestination has a thousand forms: color, sex, caste, class, culture, geography, anything that can be used to separate the elect from the damned. God must not be made to bear all the blame or we will foolishly come to think that the death of God is the death of death, the freeing of humans to enjoy a political life, a life in which actions have meaning and humans are significant to one another.

Of the figures that appear to my consciousness, those certain but unknown figures, which have meaning, which are damned? If they are a metaphor, I must find out what brings them to visit me in my place beside the sea. And if they come to visit me, can I possibly be among them?

My son and I saw a seagull kill a crab. It lifted the little beast from the shallow sea, carried it up a hundred feet, paused and then dropped it onto the hard-packed sand. And again and again, until the shell split. Then it tore the body of the crab apart with its beak and ate the living flesh in shuddering gulps. My son turned his head away. I did not remind him that the shellfish he ate were boiled alive.

The metaphor-people visit often, but briefly, sometimes in a flash, as if to remind. They do not speak to me and I do not speak to them, but I think we know one another. I wish they would tell me why they are not dead. If they know.

They must know.

In the night, after my wife is asleep, they sometimes come into the dark room. Then I cajole, I order them to reveal themselves: Speak, metaphors!

One cocks his head and smiles.

Death, the thought of death, is closing out the world. I become an old man, a doer of crossword puzzles, a sunbather. I am sodden with death. The fish are dying in the claws of the swooping gulls, but I have forgotten them. The thought of death is a narrowing. Life is shut out, a man closes in on himself. Who told Tolstoy? How did he know so exactly the feelings of Ivan Ilyich?

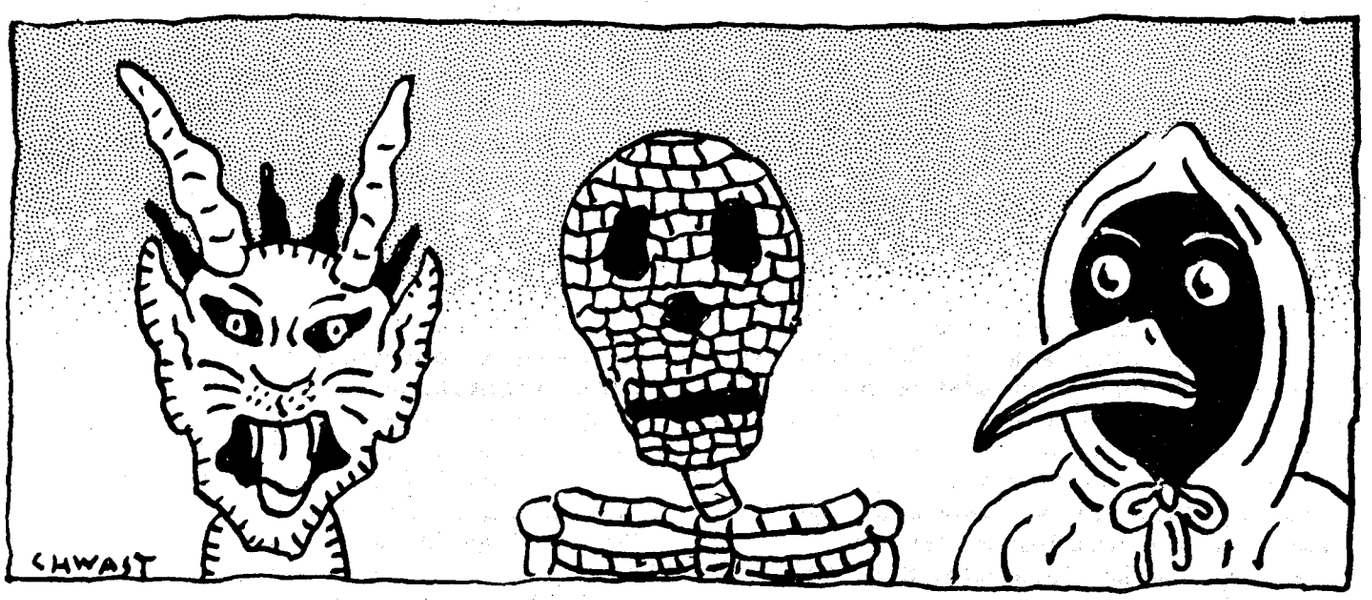
If the dying are not nice, what of the living, since we are all dying? "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" is one of the most unpleasant stories ever written, as Tolstoy must have known. The ordinary death of an ordinary man, he said of his story, perhaps to tell us that we are not nice, either. Turgenev called Tolstoy a Calvinist. Surely no one ever portrayed more precisely the political dangers of death gaining dominion, the possibility for hatred of one's neighbor, even one's own family.

When death rules we are perfectly alone, not individuals but atoms, floating free in an apolitical void; we can kill. When death rules we can no longer answer the Why Not. Then we are old; that is the true meaning of old age; it has nothing to do with chronology; the fight to prove oneself among the elect, to win eternal life at no more cost than the damnation of others, is outside time.

Eternal life for me, damnation for you: it is the machine Kant feared, and worse—a rationale for talons.

There are long sleeps, slow walks; I often misunderstand the sun. With the end of summer, my hands and feet are always cold, but I begin to understand that I am not dead, not yet.

It was different on that first night, when in the darkness a tunnel appeared and a journey began. The top of the tunnel



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was red and the bottom was blue. I saw the colors and all the shadings between in the light that shone from the distant end or the place beyond the tunnel. The light grew brighter and larger as I traveled down the tunnel. I knew in the dark moment of speeding past those ancient, tattered walls that at the end of the tube death was waiting, drawing me toward it. But I refused to go. I willed the journey to stop. I forced my eyes open and turned my head to watch the electronic numbers on the monitor of my heart. All that night I lay awake, watching the numbers, considering the meaning of the magnetic light. I examined my brain as best I could, speaking to myself in one language and answering in another, doing multiplication and long-division problems. Then I thought again of the light and what it meant. How could it have been death? I was not dead. All that I had experienced was a failure of my own imagination, a cliché. Or is that death? Is that what Borges meant about repetitions? Is that what Borges meant when he said that the repetition of one single term was enough to confound and break down the history of the world?

My wife and I are alone. There are moments when we are farther apart than we have ever been in more than a quarter of a century; those are the moments when death is in our house. There is a war with death; it lasts all day every day. It is no different from anybody else's war with death; the momentary failing of my heart has simply lifted death into consciousness. I can try to think about the struggle for supremacy between life and death that comes finally to determine a man's politics.

With time, a man begins to struggle against the weight of medicine and diet and the awful surprise of that heavy, painful heel upon the breastbone that is the gasping of his heart. Not dying, not now, not just yet, perhaps not so soon. There is no more difficult time, for in that period he must decide again how to live, whether to be old or young, whether to be a hard, reactionary man or to engage in political life, whether to have mercy or to proceed from limitless love of oneself.

It is a decision each of us makes for himself or herself: What is death's dominion?

When I raised my eyes to inquire of others in the first returning to life, I saw the pictures from Beirut. The bombs fell daily. *Mors repentina et improvisa.*

Then there was the massacre, and someone said it was far more terrible than the bombing and the shelling. How so? I wondered. Do the elect not know that death can only be understood from the point of view of the dead?

So on the days of my return to life I saw the children of Beirut as they died. But the dead and the maimed are Palestinians, someone said, mainly they are Palestinians. For a moment I thought I knew the secret of the metaphors. It was there and gone. Who were they? Why did they live?

Does history hold no lesson but the promise of the victory of death over life? Tell me, metaphors; my field of vision is closing down again, my politics may not survive. I am afraid, I want no end to dreaming. Conservatism beckons; there is always room in the pit of fools for one of the chosen to think he is among the elect.

Whoever opposes Israel's bombing of the civilian population of Beirut is anti-Semitic!

No one may criticize Israel who does not live in Israel!

Don't lecture me!

Goyim!

The gulls always have fishermen to admire their work.

If I do not oppose the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, what shall I say about the Russians in Afghanistan? Shall I ask less of Israel than I would of my own country? Shall I be the gull or the cook?

When I belonged to death, I didn't care.

How does one hoard life? By stealing the lives of others. When death takes over, there is no morality: nothing is permitted but self-interest and everything is permitted the interested one.

Who loves Jews enough to speak against the deaths in Lebanon? Who argues for the eternal lives of the Palestinians? There are echoes of the voice of Albert Camus speaking for the freedom of his native Algeria. Silence. Good men claim to be anguished, too anguished to speak. Silence, equivocations that sound like silence. To be dead is to accept the silence of the damned; there is no light after the tunnel, there is only the repetitious silence. Those who urge silence, who demand silence, are death's troops, the fools and suicides who believe that one becomes elect through serving the elect.

The color of the sea changes in autumn. It does not become as dark as wine, not here, but the translucence disappears, the water seems to thicken; there is a warning that on the coldest day the sea will steam. It is the busy season: the fish and birds are on the move, the squirrels amass their collections, the earth is covered with seeds. Spring is the season of resurrection, but autumn is the promise. One day in autumn, while walking along the beach where the seaweed had collected in iodine heaps, I saw the metaphors again.

Stay, metaphors! Be real!

They will not be real, but they will linger for a moment, long enough for me to have a closer look, to study their eyes, to ask them why they live. At last, I see beyond their clothing, beyond the props that particularize them. They will not speak to me, they will not answer my question, but it is no longer the same mystery, for I know them now, I know their name.

They are a reflection of me and I am a reflection of them. We are a family, as alike as the shape of our kidneys and as different as the whorls of our fingertips; we understand one another, but we are not death's repetitions; we are not alone; we are the creatures of life; we do politics.

I am the metaphors; the metaphors are me.

We walk together where the wild roses have turned into seeds as big as plum tomatoes. How long? I ask of my companions. For them? For me? Which? I do not know, but from that confusion I begin to understand, to shout what St. Augustine knew about love. Live, metaphors! I want you to be! □

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FORTUNE SOCIETY IS BULLISH ON CRIME PREVENTION

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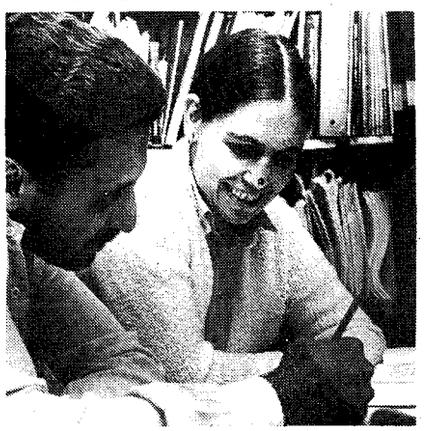

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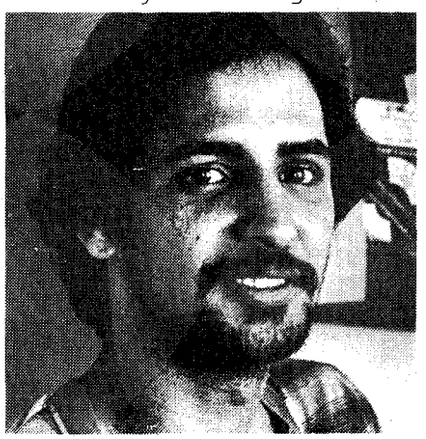

Jose Torres

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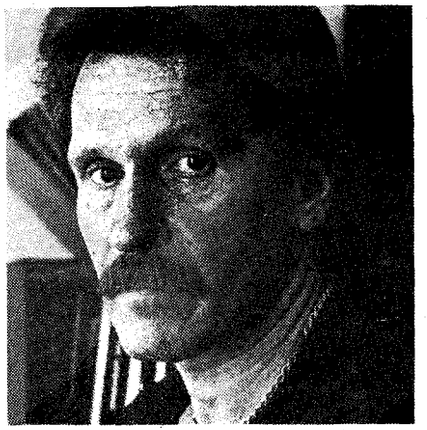

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

New Deal New York

FREDERIKA RANDALL

THE WPA GUIDE TO NEW YORK CITY: The Federal Writers' Project Guide to 1930s New York. *New introduction by William H. Whyte. Pantheon Books. 680 pp. $20. Paper $8.95.*

Tourist guidebooks promise novelty, adventure, a change of scenery—but most make the world seem flatter and more dismal. When you head out on the highway on the advice of, say, the *Mobil Travel Guide*, pleasure soon turns to boredom, then stupefaction. Mobil's America is a dreary country, a vast and seamless grid of states and Interstates spruced up at regular intervals with gas stations and Ramadas and the occasional splash of local color (when driving through Flagstaff, Arizona, don't miss the Grand Canyon). The corporate-sponsored version of the U.S.A. is a land of easy shopping. Hamburgers, historical plaques. Lobster, Lake Superior. Everything is a comestible adventure of the same order of experience.

In this generally enervating class of literature, the American Guide Series is a great eccentric. Between 1935 and 1941 the Federal Writers' Project produced more than 300 volumes, local histories of American places and state and city guidebooks, most of which are out of print today. There is a guide to Bergen County, New Jersey, and one to Galena, Illinois. There are guides to the Oregon Trail, Death Valley and U.S. 1. Together, they make up a giant and disorderly family chronicle of Americans and the places they inhabit. These are guidebooks studded not with stars and forks but with lazy rivers and lonesome highways, with dubious ancestors and slighted heroes, with tales of financial calamity, natural disasters, personal sorrow and, occasionally, serendipitous happiness or success. A reviewer of the period, the novelist Robert Cantwell, called the American Guides "a terrible and yet engaging corrective to the success stories that dominate our literature."

Frederika Randall's reviews have appeared in The New York Times Book Review, Working Papers *and* The Nation.

The New York City *Guide* is a nice introduction to what the best volumes of the series have to offer. Forty-four years out of date, it is still the best guide to New York City available, and in every way an antidote to prettified history, bourgeois civic satisfaction and numbing consumerism. Here, for example, is how the *Guide* portrays Gen. George Washington:

> It was in Kip's Bay that British men-of-war anchored September 15, 1776, to take over Manhattan Island. The Revolutionary army, wearied and disheartened after the disastrous defeat on Long Island, broke before broadsides from these vessels and fled toward Harlem Heights. George Washington tried to stem the rout. "It was said that he drew his sword and threatened to run the cowards through," wrote Rupert Hughes in his biography of Washington, "he used the cane whip he carried, and he beat his people over the shoulders in an insane hatred of their shameless cowardice. He flogged not only private soldiers but officers as well. He lashed colonels across the shoulder blades. . . . He flailed a brigadier general."

So much for the canned version of the American Revolution.

It is a pity that Pantheon's reprint, retitled *The WPA Guide to New York City*, gives us nothing of the disputatious atmosphere that surrounded the production of this zany, ironic and densely detailed portrait of the nation's largest city. A brief new introduction by William H. Whyte treats the *Guide* primarily as a city plan some forty years out of date. Yet the striking feature of the *Guide* is not that its facts are outdated but that its perspective and sensibility are more sophisticated than we expect from a guidebook today. Just as Hollywood movies of the 1930s and 1940s seem sophisticated compared with the productions that came after them, so the *Guide*, even with its moments of proletarian melodrama and screwball comedy, seems to have been written for the present, for adults.

In that distinctive adult flavor can be read some of the political conflicts of the 1930s. Among the more than 6,000 researchers and writers employed by the Federal Writers' Project, the New York City group was the largest and most contentious. New Yorkers had been active in the Writers Union campaign that pressured the New Deal for relief for unemployed writers, and were prominent in the popular-front-inspired 1935 Writers Congress. The popular-front sympathies of the New York City project made it a prominent target of anti-Communist attacks, which began in earnest in 1938 with the investigations of the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities.

Under fire from Congress and beset by political debates and labor disputes in its own ranks, the New York City group somehow produced not only the *Guide* but a companion volume of essays, *New York Panorama*, as well as several other books. (For a lively account of daily life on the New York City project, see Jerre Mangione's *The Dream and the Deal.*) The group had six directors in as many years. No doubt it was wearing to supervise hundreds of—no doubt—arrogant writers assigned to write about department stores, memorial plaques, equestrian statues and assorted street corners. And yet, the result of this "antiquarian leaf-raking" (as someone once said of writers on the dole) is a guidebook that is remarkably consistent in style. (That consistency probably owes something to the services of John Cheever, listed as editorial assistant, who is said to have edited the entire manuscript, pulling it together for publication in 1939.)

Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Claude McKay, David Ignatow, Maxwell Bodenheim and Charlotte Wilder were among the diverse group of writers who worked on the New York City project at one time or another. Wright, fresh from Chicago and in his 20s, is reported to have been an energetic participant. Mangione quotes a song Wright spontaneously composed on the first payday:

> Roosevelt! You're my man!
> When the times come
> I ain't got a cent,
> You buy my groceries
> And pay my rent.
> Mr. Roosevelt, you're my man.

Not everyone on the New Deal payroll had such ebullient spirits. A memoir of the period, attributed by Mangione to Harry Rosolenko, quotes an unnamed poet assigned to copy street names for a map of the Bronx: "If you don't take me off that stupid project,"

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he told his supervisor, "I'm going to commit suicide. I, who have dedicated my whole life to poetry, would rather die than go on working on a street map for the Bronx."

Among the volumes produced by the Writers' Project, the New York City *Guide* is especially notable for its amused, urbane style and its sense of historical irony. There is as much fascination with decline as there is celebration of American places. Take this, from the sketch of Bellevue Hospital:

> About twenty thousand bodies pass each year through Bellevue's morgue, eighty-five hundred of which are never claimed. All unclaimed bodies are photographed and described, and a docket entered for them at the Police Department's Bureau of Missing Persons. After reposing for two weeks or more in refrigerated vaults of the morgue, some of the cadavers are given to private embalming schools whose students practice in a room adjoining the vaults, and a certain number are allotted to medical schools for dissection. The remainder, about 170 a week, are placed in plain, wooden coffins and carried on a barge, up the East River to Potter's Field on Hart's Island.

The *Guide*'s New York is a city in perpetual transition. The lead statue of George III that once stood in Bowling Green is gone, melted down by the colonists to make bullets during the Revolution. Where Tiffany's once flourished on Union Square now stands the Amalgamated Bank, the city's first labor bank. The stones of New York University's main buildings were cut by prisoners at Sing Sing, prompting an early labor demonstration, the Stone Cutters' Riot of 1834. Barrow Street was once named Raisin Street, which was in turn a corruption of Reason Street, named, appealingly, in honor of Tom Paine.

The Gilded Age rich are teased for their pretentious Fifth Avenue mansions: "In the early 1880s the brownstone tradition was broken by a desire for French chateaux. The frenzied search for art works, for the epidermis and entrails of medieval castles and cathedrals, made it difficult to tell a fashionable mansion from a museum." And always, care is taken to establish the social archeology, in this case to unearth the squatters' town that once occupied upper Park and Fifth Avenues. "The squatters yielded gradually to the steam shovel," reports the *Guide*, "a new tool which made it profitable to level the rocky terrain for building sites."

Some other details you won't find in the Mobil guide or its like: The Little Club, a Prohibition-era jazz hangout, where Jack Teagarden sang, "I'd rather drink muddy water, Lord, sleep in a hollow log, than be up here in New York treated like a dirty dog." The story of Poe's miserable end in Fordham, the Bronx: "The Poes came to Fordham in the spring of 1846, hoping that the country air would prove beneficial to Mrs. Poe who was dying of tuberculosis. He was already famous . . . but honor brought no relief from poverty and ostracism added to his troubles. The situation was desperate. His mother in law, Mrs. Maria Clemm, peddled his unwanted manuscripts and at times scoured the fields for edible herbs to feed the three."

Foley Square was once a marshy pond known as The Collect, where in 1796 John Fitch "conducted experiments" with a steamboat. Richmond, Staten Island, became Richmond Town, "no doubt by common consent," after its original marine-inspired name, "Coccles Town," evolved into "Cuckoldstown." An oak near City Hall commemorates a man hanged for treason, while the Maine Memorial at the Columbus Circle corner of Central Park honors those who died on the U.S.S. Maine:

> Figures grouped on the prow of a wooden battleship symbolize Courage awaiting the Flight of Peace, the Feeble supported by Fortitude, and the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The whole is topped by a robed figure of Columbia Triumphant, riding in a shell drawn by three sea horses. Members of the City Art Commission were forced to come to the defense of Attilio Piccirilli's sculptural group when a high wind ripped the burlap off before the official unveiling and artists living near by questioned its artistic merit.

Block by block, the *Guide* gives the same attention to humble neighborhoods as to flashier midtown quarters. "Crowded, noisy and squalid in many of its aspects. . . . The district is best known as a slum," we read of the Lower East Side, where one of the historical sites considered worthy of note is the Cherry Street location of Gotham Court, an infamous 1850s tenement where the sun never shone and the death rate from cholera was the highest in the city. (Residents called it Paradise

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Alley.) Lower East Side street gangs and gangsters, among them "Legs" Diamond, also rate a mention. So do *The Jewish Daily Forward*, the Socialist Party, the anarchist paper *Freiheit*, Al Smith, Boss Tweed and the Yiddish theater.

The *Guide* also manages to touch on nature and prehistory in a long, fervently evolutionist description of the exhibits at the Museum of Natural History. And for poetical engineering there is the Brooklyn Bridge: "And in the wastes of night, so passionate is the contrast between the deserted and melancholy bridge entrances and the moonlit altitude of the passage itself, that the solitary pedestrian feels himself drawn into association with all the extravagances of the poets."

"Road by road, town by town, down under the alluvia of the industrial culture of the twentieth century, lay an America that belied many of the traditional legends about itself," wrote Alfred Kazin in 1942, praising the American Guide Series. It is startling how quickly those excavations made by the Federal Writers' Project were covered over, replaced by the corporate-sponsored commercial folklore that flourished in postwar America. It would be interesting to see whether a writers' project in the 1980s could ruffle the smooth surface of corporate consumerism.

Meanwhile, *The WPA Guide to New York City* holds up remarkably well as a working tour guide. It has an excellent bibliography, nice maps and numerous striking photographs and drawings by W.P.A. artists. No tourist or resident of New York City should be without a copy, if only to savor its idiosyncratic blend of social curiosity, urbanity and scope.

"The late afternoon sunshine glitters on windshields, chauffeurs' caps, on Parisian gowns, Chinese ivories, ebony from Africa, Mexican pottery, and furs from Siberia," reads a passage on the working day in Manhattan.

> *Driving back from Southampton in the fall we used to sit up front with the chauffeur. Aunt Helen had a staircase in her house that cost fifteen thousand dollars. He died right in the middle of the depression.* Smells of cooking fill the corridors. The lights go on in a loft on a side street, in an office on the thirty-fourth floor of the Empire State Building, along the streets and the bridges. The tugs are riding with port and starboard lights.
>
> The sun leaves the highest of the city's buildings. There are no steamship blasts now but loud are the hoarse pipings of tugs, the yap of ferries with homeward-bound crowds. *I've worked overtime three nights in a row. Two martinis. Did you see the way he looked at me when I put on my hat and walked out?* □

Smarter Than You Think

JOHN B. JUDIS

REAGAN. *By Lou Cannon. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 464 pp. $18.95.*

Some Presidents are assumed to be highly intelligent no matter what they do. No President in the last fifty years has done anything as stupid as the Bay of Pigs invasion, but even his critics saw John Kennedy as a fount of political savvy. On the other hand, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower were widely considered dingbats who could barely read or add.

Ronald Reagan has enjoyed the same kind of reputation that Truman and Eisenhower had. His intelligence was widely underestimated by his gubernatorial opponent in 1966, Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, and by his Presidential foe in 1980, Jimmy Carter. Carter believed that he need only trap Reagan in debate to expose him as the simpleton he really was. But Carter learned—as Robert Kennedy had learned in 1968—that the former actor was a formidable opponent. Like Warren Harding, Reagan has also been labeled as easily manipulable by his chief advisers and by various political establishments. During the 1980 campaign, most journalists expected that if Reagan were elected, he would bow to pressure from Wall Street and cast off much of his conservative baggage—most particularly, the Kemp-Roth tax cut. Wrong again. Just as Reagan left an indelible mark on California during his eight years as Governor, he is now leaving his mark on the nation.

There are two reasons why Reagan is so widely underestimated by his critics. Like Eisenhower and Truman, his manner is disarmingly unpretentious: he is Mr. Smith come to Washington, the man in the street elevated to power. He is also an ideologue, a political conservative. Therefore, even though he is the first President since Abraham Lincoln to win office on the crest of a popular movement, he has two strikes against him: he appears to be an ordinary middle-class American, and he holds beliefs—in the sanctity of Taiwan ("Free China") and the evil of government—that seem ridiculous to the mainstream media and to his centrist political opponents.

Washington Post White House correspondent Lou Cannon's biography is the best book to date on Reagan—far superior to Lee Edwards's sycophancy or Rowland Evans and Robert Novak's neoconservative revisionism. Cannon, who has followed Reagan since he covered the 1966 campaign for the *San José Mercury News* and who wrote a 1969 portrait of the Governor in *Ronnie and Jesse*, avoids ax-grinding. His *Reagan* is, for the most part, both fair and informative.

But it is also fundamentally flawed. Reflecting both the Washington journalist's characteristic obsession with political mechanics and the centrist's disdain for ideological extremism, Cannon devotes inordinate space to White House power plays—Reagan's relations with aide Michael Deaver, for instance—but virtually ignores Reagan's conservatism and the conservative movement that he has participated in for two decades. "Conservatism" does not even rate a place in the book's index.

Cannon also succumbs to the Warren Harding view of Reagan. Cannon's Reagan "has a passive nature," "is a role player," is "passive and pleasant," has an "increasingly visible knowledge gap," is "intuitively keen but intellectually lazy." He "did not know enough" and "did not know how much he didn't know." No matter that Reagan also has "enormous powers of personal persuasion" and can impress others with the "authority of his compelling personality."

Cannon is at his best explaining Reagan's successes as a political communicator and as Governor of California. He attributes Reagan's political skills to his theatrical background and to his past as a New Deal Democrat. Cannon believes that Reagan acquired his empathetic political style by listening

John B. Judis is associate editor of In These Times.

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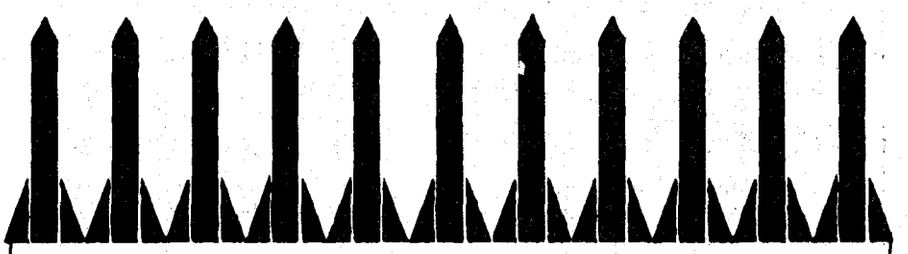
to Franklin Roosevelt. Reagan's favorite phrases, like "rendezvous with destiny," date from F.D.R. "Though he left the party of Roosevelt," Cannon writes, "he refused to abandon the words and phrases which provided a common bond with his fellow citizens."

As an actor, television host and spokesman for General Electric, Reagan learned to condense his views into simple anecdotes and one-liners that stuck in his listeners' minds. Cannon relates how during Reagan's preparations for his October television debate with Carter, his advisers wanted him to master the details of strategic weapons deployment, but he "spent his time practicing one-liners, believing that the viewing public was more apt to remember a deft phrase than a technical argument." Of course, Reagan was right. One amply rehearsed phrase, "There you go again," used in response to Carter's charge that Reagan had opposed Medicare in 1964, sent Carter to the canvas.

Cannon's account of Reagan's governorship (1967-74) suffers from an apparent lack of access to Reagan's papers at the Hoover Institution. The only substantially new material that Cannon introduces are the minutes from Cabinet meetings during Reagan's first year in office; these do reveal Reagan's initial ignorance of policy. ("I venture to say that there isn't anyone in the U.S. who was ever let go without medical care," Reagan says in a 1967 discussion of Medi-Cal benefits.) But Cannon convincingly demonstrates that Reagan matured in office, learning to work with the Democrat-controlled legislature without abandoning his principles.

Cannon argues that Reagan's 1971 welfare reform bill, drafted with State Assembly Democratic leader Bob Moretti, was an admirable piece of legislation that simultaneously simplified the law, tightened eligibility and substantially increased benefits. Cannon points out that irrespective of Reagan's often strident attacks on education (he once charged universities with "subsidizing intellectual curiosity"), spending on education increased more rapidly during his tenure than it had under his predecessor. Cannon's Governor Reagan "accommodated and compromised and found ways of doing things which accomplished parts of his purpose." Reagan "tempered his ideological proclivities with executive pragmatism."

But what of those ideological proclivities? As late as 1950, Reagan was



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campaigning on behalf of New Deal Democratic Senator Helen Gahagan Douglas against her challenger, Richard Nixon. Fourteen years later, he would give a speech on behalf of Barry Goldwater's 1964 Presidential candidacy that even Goldwater's advisers feared was too extreme on the right.

According to Cannon, Reagan was drawn to the right primarily through his 1954-62 experiences as a traveling spokesman for G.E. "The audiences on Reagan's G.E. tours usually were of the service club or corporate variety, and the questions thrown at him often focused on inflation or government regulation," Cannon writes. "In the process of answering these questions in a manner pleasing to the questioners, Reagan became a defender of corporations and a critic of the government that the corporate leaders thought was strangling them."

But this portrait of Reagan as the "eager-to-please" politician turned conservative fails to explain the depth of his political conversion. By the early 1960s, Reagan had gone well beyond whatever political revisionism his job for G.E. entailed. He worried G.E. by attacking one of its prize customers, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and after Kennedy's election in 1960, Reagan was advised by the company to confine himself to selling products. By this time, Reagan had also become a regular reader of *Human Events* and *National Review*, periodicals which in those days were much farther from the political mainstream than they are today. He had become friends with *National Review* editor William F. Buckley Jr. and with important members of California's right wing.

Cannon consistently understates or ignores Reagan's conservative commitments. His account of the G.E. years is blank on Reagan's reading or political associations during that period. His account of the important 1974-80 period is limited to the immediate details of Reagan's 1976 and 1980 campaigns and omits the role Reagan and his close associates played in developing the conservative infrastructure of think tanks, lobbies and political action committees that would provide much of the financial, organizational and intellectual basis for the Presidential campaigns. All Cannon says about this period is that Reagan's views "shifted rightward as his focus moved from the governorship to the conservative banquet circuit."

Cannon also virtually ignores Reagan's ambivalent relations with New Right social activists. As California Governor, Reagan signed one of the first bills liberalizing abortion restrictions. He also backed the E.R.A. But during his Presidential primary campaigns, he closely identified himself with the New Right, although in office he has appeared to hold them at arms'

A WOMAN FEEDING GULLS

They cry out at the sight of her and come flying
Over the tidal flats from miles away,
Sideslipping and wheeling
In sloping gray-and-white interwoven spirals
Whose center is her
And the daily bread she casts downwind on the water
While rising to spread her arms
Like wings for the calling of still more gulls around her,
Their cries intermingling at the end of daylight
With the sudden abundance
Of this bread returning after the hungry night
And the famine of morning
And the endlessly hungry opening and closing
Of wings and arms and the sky
Now as I come to the shore by the same wind
To share the sight of her and to feast with them.

PANDORA'S DREAM

Falling asleep, she saw the lid of the box
Beside her glittering, the unknown dowry
She was forbidden to look at,
But under eyelids heavier than moonlight
She carried that glitter down into a dream.

She was in the dark, in a chamber, touching its walls
And floor and ceiling with pieces of herself,
Some glinting like fireflies, some burnt black and cold,
Odd flapping and squirming pieces, feathered
And furred, bone-pointed, clawed, all wanting out.

But there was nowhere to go, no door, no window.
She was trapped as if in a box. Then with a groan
Of hinges, the ceiling opened,
And there in the widening strip of light, grown huge
And terrible, her own face looked in.

And all those parts of her in a swarm went flying
Upward and outward: maggots with bat wings,
Pink termites, scarlet bees, green wasps in a fury
And moths on fire like twistings of paper
And through them a death-squeaking of black mice.

She became that other holding the lid upraised
And wishing what she'd scattered would return
And shut itself in again to be forgotten,
That the god who'd cursed her with this gift
Would relent and rescue her from a curious heart.

She woke, she stretched, she forgot, she yawned, she saw
Only a box at her bedside, shimmering
With promises she could keep or break by lifting
A single clasp and using her naked eyes.
She rose, still in a dream, and opened it.

David Wagoner

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length. What are Reagan's real convictions? No answer is to be found in these pages.

Reagan cannot be understood outside the context of the conservative movement. It is as if one tried to write a biography of French President François Mitterrand and left out his experiences in the French Socialist Party. Reagan was the politician most responsible for transforming a pessimistic, often unworldly and elitist conservatism into a popular, even majority politics. In a March 1981 speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference, Reagan listed some of the conservatives who had influenced him—Frank Meyer, Henry Hazlitt, Frederich von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, James Burnham and Russell Kirk. These right-wing intellectuals did not see themselves, however, as the vanguard of a popular movement but as a "remnant," in Albert Jay Nock's term, placed on earth to preserve the standards of truth, beauty and goodness while the West went to hell.

Goldwater's capture of the Republican nomination in 1964 encouraged conservatives, but his landslide defeat seemed to reconfirm their marginality. Reagan was one of several Republican conservatives—others included Gordon Allott of Colorado and Paul Laxalt of Nevada—who were swept into office in 1966. Reagan was the most important of them because he won office in a state previously dominated by liberal Democrats and progressive Republicans. His 1966 campaign, in which he muted his economic conservatism—eschewing attacks on Social Security, for example, and using social issues (opposition to campus demonstrators, fair housing laws, "welfare cheaters") to attract blue-collar Democrats—became a model for conservatives in the 1970s, including those who formed the New Right.

In 1980, Reagan campaigned on the economics of von Mises and von Hayek, but instead of promising the least bad of all possible economies, he offered voters a vision of the best. In Reagan's version of Austrian neo-classicism, there were no business cycles, and poverty and inequality were not intrinsic to capitalism but the unfortunate results of government intervention. Reagan's 1980 campaign squared the conservative circle: it appeared to demonstrate that the conservative commitment to untrammeled free enterprise was compatible with blue-collar prosperity.

In his first two years in office, Reagan has been battered by a near depression and by a growing rift in the Atlantic alliance, both the results of his policies. But Reagan so far has weathered the storm. In his decision to accept Senator Robert Dole's tax increase bill last August, he displayed the same flexibility and "executive pragmatism" that characterized his second term as Governor. In the November elections, he was able to convert a potential disaster into a minor setback by defining the terms of the political debate.

If Reagan does fail to establish conservatism as a popular, majority politics, it will not be because of a lack of intelligence or administrative ability. Reagan has already given it a better shot than any other politician has. If he fails, it will be because the conservative agenda of deregulation, regressive redistribution and militarism is, after all, incompatible with prosperity at home and the spread of American ideals abroad. □

How He Got That Story

BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON

READ ALL ABOUT IT! The Collected Adventures of a Maverick Reporter. *By Sidney Zion. Summit Books. 362 pp. $16.50.*

Sidney Zion is a friend of mine, and I can't be sure whether my affection for him has perverted my judgment of his book. In real life, he is lots of fun; he is also maddening, contentious, brassy and opinionated. If there were such a thing as aggreeable offensiveness, Sidney Zion would own it.

Read All About It! (and I hope you do) is a collection of pieces published (Zion tells you all about how) and unpublished (Zion tells you all about why) about the Supreme Court and criminal justice, partisan politics and political conventions, sports, pop music, the Middle East and Jewish gangsters. Nobody could dislike a man who is consistently interesting on so broad a range of subjects, though a lot of people do. Most of all, though, Zion writes about reporting, his abiding passion: "A press card," Zion says, "unlike a lawyer's license—or anything else—provided a front-row seat to the lively doings of the world; it was an entree to everything, including the shadows. And when you got the story, you didn't go home and tell your wife and friends, you printed it, right out there for all to read, under your own byline. What could be better than that?"

Zion is at his most engaging when he writes about the editors and publishers whom it is his pleasure to tickle and torment. He is never loath to name names—the names in this case being those of editors who cause most writers to tremble, for which reason *Read All About It!* should be read by anyone remotely interested in journalism.

Zion was the guy who blew the whistle on Daniel Ellsberg. He found out (read all about it) who leaked the Pentagon Papers to *The Times*'s Neal Sheehan and, although he was a reporter without a paper to report to, lost no time in telling the world about it via radio and television. This may not strike you as adorable—it made Zion quite unpopular in liberal circles for a while—but he had his reasons. Some of these may seem vain and self-serving, but they're certainly not mealy-mouthed: "In answer to one of the innumerable questions as to why I went after the story, I said, 'To satisfy my ego.' There was truth to it—if no ego, what's a byline for?—but I was stupid to say it. . . . I looked like a scoundrel." On the other hand, "What the hell is a reporter doing asking another reporter why he broke one of the big stories of the time?"

As for Jewish gangsters: Well, Zion prefers not to have Jews come in the shape of victims, even if the alternative is for them to be con men. Such troublesome questions as how many nice Jewish kids *became* victims—of drugs peddled by mobsters, for instance—Zion doesn't address. Nor did these questions vex me in more than a subliminal way until long after I'd read his romantic profiles of Meyer Lansky and Izzy Schwartzberger—which may say something about my moral laxity, but which also says something about Zion's style, so vivid, so (I knew I

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison is the author of Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of the Jehovah's Witnesses *(Simon and Schuster) and* Off Center *(Dial Press).*

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couldn't avoid the cliché for long) Runyonesque. Here's Schwartzberger:

> "Why did I become a criminal, was I crazy? *Yes.* I'm a psychopath, I'm an egomaniac, what are you talking about? You mean I shoulda gone straight? Go away!
>
> "I need action. . . . Where I grew up on the Lower East Side you either became a judge or went to the electric chair. I'm the happy medium."

As for the Middle East: If you own rigid opinions on this subject, Zion is likely to drive you crazy. He believes that "there is and *has been* a Palestinian nation since 1946 . . . that nation is now the Kingdom of Jordan." He also asks us to believe that when she was editor of *The Times*'s Op-Ed page, Charlotte Curtis ("an old friend") "had fallen for the Palestinian line . . . plain for all to see. She was running what I called the Fatah page of the *Times*." So naturally he decided "to set her up, old friend or not." He took his Palestine-is-Jordan piece directly to publisher Punch Sulzberger, who ran it. Take it or leave it.

As for pop music: I yield to no one in my devotion to Frank Sinatra. I love him completely and forever until I die, and I don't care whom he does or does not hang out with. But I don't make the leap Zion does (in what he prides himself is one of the most controversial pieces ever published in *The New York Times Magazine*), which is that rock music was hyped and sold to kids who would otherwise be listening to Lena Horne and Lady Day, Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart. I'm not entirely sure Zion knows the difference between the Beatles and The Who, and his case has holes in it big enough for Basie's band to swing through—but, like everything he writes, it's fun to read. And, like everything he writes, the central argument can't be dismissed out of hand.

Freedom of the press is, in many ways, what *Read All About It!* is about: if you're going to have a free press, you're going to have big mouths like Zion. If he makes you mad, he also restores your faith in the possibility of honorable people honorably disagreeing. One doesn't feel small or querulous when one disagrees with Zion, and that is a measure of his expansiveness and generosity. □

Annals of Celebrity

JOHN UPDIKE SPEAKS OUT

On breakfast: Left to my own devices, I have a Spartan breakfast of orange juice, Total cereal with milk and decaffeinated coffee.

On lunch: About 1:20 my inner clock says it's time to eat and I have lunch and the pleasure of my wife, Martha's, company, although she has her own inner clock and often eats earlier than I do. I generally have something like a ham sandwich.

On bologna: We had all sorts of bologna, which we ate instead of other sliced things like ham and cheese. Lebanon bologna is the most famous, but I prefer Lehigh bologna because it's more peppery.

On meatloaf: I used to make meatloaf. You can have ideas about meatloaf—leaving something out, putting something in, trimming it to a precise shape.

On omelets: I read a little book on the subject and got quite good at it, pulling those edges back so the runny part would go to the center.

On water: I drink water. I notice water is coming back.

On his most memorable meal: My most memorable meal was a lunch with Alfred Knopf, who took me to La Cote Basque when Henri Soule still owned it. I can't remember what I had but . . .

On cooking: I don't cook as much as other husbands do. Politically, I'm for it, but I just don't do it much.

On eating: One of the nicest things about eating is the sensation you get when you put something like salted nutmeats or caramels in your mouth.

"John Updike Ruminates On Matters Gustatory," by Mimi Sheraton, The New York Times, *December 15, 1982*

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

84 Charing Cross Road
Steaming

These two plays, the latest additions to the imports from Britain that have made up so large a part of this New York season, have been running for many months in London and have received considerable critical acclaim. This is a sobering fact for those who, like myself, think of British theater as a good deal livelier than our own these days. It goes to show that even the London season has its humdrum or uninspired side, as well as its outrages. Neither of the two is flagrantly bad—which is to say an affront to one's intellect or esthetic sense—but both are singularly dull.

84 Charing Cross Road is much the more boring. It struck me as Victorian in every respect, dramatically speaking; genteel, inert, full of talk, it never engages any of the senses, not even that of hearing. The play is based on a book by Helene Hanff, an American writer who from 1949 to 1969 ordered books from Marks and Co., an antiquarian bookshop in London. She then published a book made up of the correspondence, which was chiefly with Frank Doel, a representative of the firm. James Roose-Evans, who has adapted it for the stage, once wrote an interesting study of twentieth-century experimental theater, but from the dramaturgy on display here, one would never have guessed.

For most of the play the stage is divided into two acting areas, Hanff's New York apartment and the London bookshop. The letters are read by either the writer or the recipient, with little bits of stage business sometimes accompanying the readings. Only when Hanff goes to London toward the end does she meet her correspondents face to face. The result is a drama almost totally devoid of dramatic action.

Ellen Burstyn does what she can to give the stage Hanff some animation, but she's continually defeated by the lines she has to speak. She says things like, "I never knew a book could be such a joy to touch," and "I've never owned a book with pages all edged in gold," and she tells Doel (Joseph Maher) not to send her Keats or Shelley, since she wants "poets who can make love

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without slobbering." For all her love of books, Hanff appears never to have liked literature. *84 Charing Cross Road* seems to have been written for people like that: "theater-lovers" who don't really like drama.

Steaming is the first play by Nell Dunn, whose novels *Up the Junction* and *Poor Cow* created a little stir some years ago. Set in a Turkish bath in London, the play recounts the encounters and conversations that a half-dozen women have with one another, this time under the pressure of an external event: the threatened closing of the baths to make way for a library.

Once you get accustomed to the exotic setting (the steam room is offstage but there's a good-sized pool in sight) and to the women undressing, roaming or lounging about in the buff and then dressing again, there's not very much to hold one's interest. The women include an up-tight wife whose wealthy husband has just left her, a lower-class girl who has been out for all she can get, a mother with a slightly retarded daughter in her 30s whom she alternately tyrannizes and babies, and the baths attendant, an earthy type who is responsible for a good deal of the morale-building.

The women talk about their fathers, their husbands, lovers or exes, their children and so on. They ask about men, "Why do we let them get away with it?" and admit in one case a desire "to be loved," in another a craving for more sex, and in general say nothing more than what we might expect. The ultimate wisdom they reach is that whatever their rationales have been (lack of money, lack of education, conventional upbringing) they were and are responsible for their actions, and their culminating state of mind is expressed in their decision to "go down fighting" in defense of their beloved baths. *Steaming* could be seen as a feminist work (though consciousness is not so much raised as broadened) but one of such lackluster perception and uneventfulness that I can't imagine any but the rawest ideologues being taken with it. □

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For a compendium of erroneous, untrue and just plain stupid statements by experts, we would appreciate hearing of any sources, anecdotes, documents, etc. about inexpert authorities in any field, in any age. Write Nation Box 80.

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U	■	H	■	N	■	U	■	H	■	U	■	U	■	W
T	H	R	I	V	E	S	■	R	I	S	O	T	T	O
T	■	I	■	O	■	T	■	U	■	H	■	C	■	R
O	F	F	■	C	A	L	A	S	H	■	G	O	O	D
■	■	T	■	A	■	E	■	H	■	A	■	M	■	P
S	H	Y	S	T	E	R	S	■	O	R	D	E	A	L
L	■	■	■	I	■	S	■	F	■	M	■	■	■	A
O	F	F	T	O	A	■	F	A	M	O	U	S	L	Y
W	■	I	■	N	■	H	■	I	■	R	■	T	■	■
D	O	Z	E	■	C	O	U	R	S	E	■	A	L	L
O	■	Z	■	T	■	O	■	G	■	D	■	M	■	U
W	E	L	L	A	N	D	■	A	U	C	T	I	O	N
N	■	E	■	R	■	O	■	M	■	A	■	N	■	C
S	A	D	A	T	■	O	Y	E	R	R	E	A	C	H

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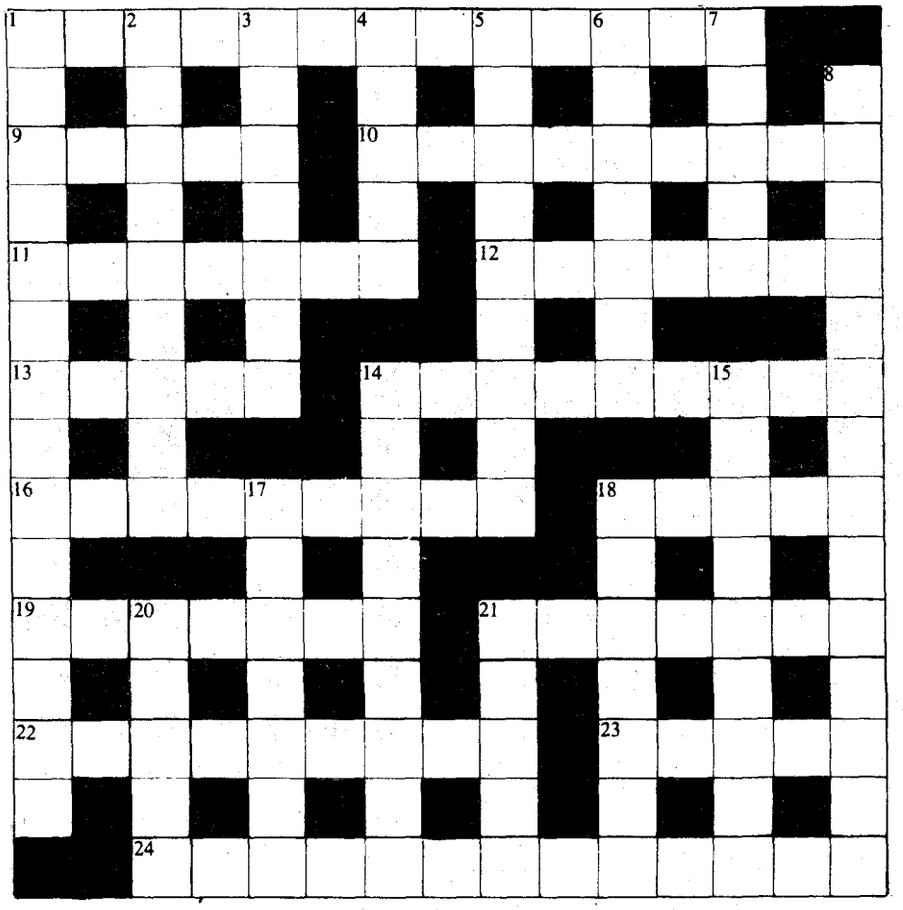

ACROSS

1 Sounds as though commercial talk should be accompanied by billing and cooing. (6,7)
9 So it returns about once around the course backwards—they might appear in rings. (5)
0 The way they used to beat the feet! (9)
1 One of those things raised in a questioning expression. (7)
2 Berg probably has it, as a possible quality of the aloof. (7)
3 What one does with certain bags. (5)
4 With man-to-man talk, a little shows what might neutralize something. (9)
6 Although it was brief in one film, a later one referred to a close example, not being first or second. (9)
8 Minute orifices involved in splitting atoms. (5)
9 Makes an appearance to describe what a retroussé feature does. (5,2)
1 A place of confinement and possibly one who should be put there. (7)
2 What one becomes when out of favor in certain countries. (It's twelve o'clock around both poles, for each one inside.) (3-6)
3 Who bids one this? A good buyer, by the sound of it. (5)
4 If you do, you might dust off the globe at the same time. (That's what the aggressor threatens to do.) (4,3,3,3)

DOWN

1 Where they come together for beef. (7,7)
2 Laid up, disturbed, etc., with 99, but that's the nature of logical argumentation. (9)
3 If one does, one probably has a policy of making certain in those holding office. (7)
4 The Spanish tie, perhaps, found in a well-known joint. (5)
5 He might fix your pipes to hang down the wrong way, getting in better shape. (3,6)
6 One might (on paper) with his last, or first and last. (7)
7 Pull on a rope, right in the middle of a "yo-ho." (5)
8 What a rabbit, a boxer in training and a kangaroo might do in this event? (3,4,3,4)
14 Stop in at a sort of it—of course being first! (9)
15 Man, I'm also upset, which is an inconsistency! (9)
17 Sup badly, and cry for this—it's a sharply increased rise in activity. (7)
18 Crisp in a chef's production, which includes a vegetable. (7)
20 What they do in the city as a project? (5)
21 In Canada do they outlaw the very loud here? (5)

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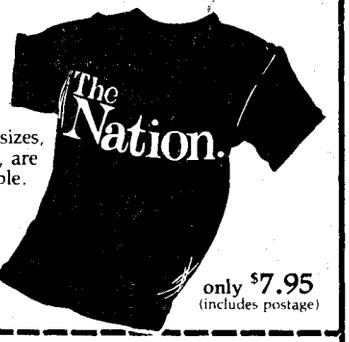

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